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ABSTRACT

This report examines the use of community-based support to facilitate curriculum renewal efforts in small rural school districts. Interviews with educators from five school districts in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington describe three approaches to curriculum renewal: community-initiated approaches, state-directed reform efforts, and school-initiated efforts. All school districts found that community-based support and involvement of community members were responsible for their success. Projects included preserving Native American language and culture, meeting new state curriculum guidelines, and conducting drug and alcohol abuse prevention programs. Successful program implementation depended on community resources such as specialized knowledge, technical assistance, and fiscal resources. Other important elements were effective communication between the school district and community members, adequate funding, community members holding leadership roles, and school district support of community efforts. School districts reported that projects developed a strong sense of local ownership and input, created classroom materials and approaches that had high utility, kept the district current with the latest in curriculum and instructional development, and utilized resources to assist school districts in meeting new state curriculum standards. Other benefits of the community-based approach included improved collaboration and understanding, increased community unity, and improved student-parent relationships. This report includes steps for implementing a community-based curriculum renewal program and work sheets for program implementation. (LP)

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The Use of Community-Based Support to Effect Curriculum Renewal in Rural Settings

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Current research and development with small, rural schools demonstrates a need for support of curriculum designed to enhance the quality of educational opportunity for rural students. Resources to support curriculum renewal among small, rural school districts are severely limited. There are cases, however, of small, rural school districts and communities which have implemented creative curriculum renewal approaches to improve the quality of educational opportunity. One of these promising approaches is the use of community-based support to meet these school districts' curriculum renewal needs. Five small, rural communities and school districts were identified and visited to gather interview data for Handbook Four. They are: Alaska-Gateway School District in Tok, Alaska; Meadows Valley School District in New Meadows, Idaho; Scobey School District in Scobey, Montana; Pinehurst School District in Pinehurst, Oregon; and, Quileute Tribal School in La Push, Washington.

This handbook, based on interviews with individuals using such a process, reports on the use of community-based support to facilitate curriculum renewal efforts. It is organized into six sections and details the strengths of this approach. The sections are:

- Community-Based Support (a description)
- Implementation of Community-Based Curriculum Renewal Projects
- Effect of Community-Based Support on Local Curriculum
- The Benefits of Community-Based Support
- Implementation Steps for a Community-Based Curriculum Renewal Program
- Implications

Following are the highlights of the major findings in each of these sections.

Community-Based Support

The small, rural school districts and their community members investigated in this study are increasing their collaboration in curriculum renewal endeavors. These school districts and their communities have looked inward to identify and utilize available

curriculum renewal resources. These sites, in essence, are developing their own capacity to engage in effective curriculum renewal. The small, rural school districts found their community members particularly valuable for the following reasons:

- Community members may possess knowledge and other resources that enable the districts to meet new curriculum standards
- In small, rural school districts with limited and over-worked staff, some community members may have more time to lead curriculum renewal efforts
- Some community members may alone possess needed skills and training, or critical cultural and historical information necessary to lead new curriculum undertakings

Interview data reveal the development of three community-based curriculum renewal approaches that are similar in design yet contain subtle operational differences. The first is a community-initiated approach in which community members propose change(s) in the school district's current curriculum and instructional offerings. In this approach, the community makes the first move to bring about change in the school. The second approach is state-directed reform, in which the school district solicits the use of community-based resources such as time, knowledge, and expertise to lead the school district's efforts to achieve state mandated reform measures. Unlike the community-initiated approach, the school district makes the first move and asks key community members for their assistance. In this effort, one or more community members play significant roles in the school district's efforts to meet state curriculum standards. The third approach, school initiated curriculum renewal, is one in which the school district starts the change process. The school district identifies community-held resources and seeks community members to assist in their curriculum renewal endeavors. The school district attempts to use extant resources community members possess such as knowledge about particular cultural phenomena or little known life skills that will enrich students' classroom experiences.

The key differences among the three approaches are the factors that drive their development. For example, in approach number one, community members approach the

school and say, "This is what we want or need." "We would like the school to assist or play a major role in bringing it about." In approach number two, state departments of education say, "Our public schools need to engage in major reform efforts--we will establish some guidelines to assist them," and school districts subsequently look to the community for leadership or other forms of assistance. In approach number three, the school district says,"We're going to make these changes, and we will ask the community to help." The important difference between approach two and three is that in approach three, the school district initiates the change rather than the state department(s) of education. A similarity with both of these approaches is that the school looks to the community for needed resources. Regardless, however, of the subtle etiology of these approaches, the community-based support each district relied upon was responsible for the success of its curriculum renewal efforts.

Implementation of Community-Based Curriculum Renewal Projects

The success of the projects investigated in this study depended primarily on the resources that community members brought to their school districts. These resources consisted fundamentally of specialized knowledge and technical assistance, and fiscal resources dedicated to assisting their districts in meeting their curriculum renewal needs. Utilization of these resources came through partnership agreements struck between each of the school districts and members of their communities. These agreements were, for the most part, informal arrangements made between the involved parties that worked quite effectively.

Several other elements were vital to the successful implementation of each site's community-based curriculum renewal project. These elements existed across all of the sites and appeared equally important in each one. They include:

- Effective lines of communication between school district and community members
- Adequate funding to pay for each project

- Key community person or persons who had active roles in each project
- School district leadership that supported the renewal project.

Effect of Community-Based Support on Local Curriculum

The three approaches of community-based support had varying degrees of impact on the local curriculum in the school districts investigated for this study. For these districts, this support clearly is a necessary ingredient influencing the quality of their curriculum renewal efforts. Interview data indicate that community-based support for curriculum renewal influenced school district's curriculum in the following areas:

- Curriculum that reflects a sense of local ownership and input
- Curriculum materials and approaches that have high utility in the classroom
- District curriculum that reflects the latest curriculum and instructional developments
- Curriculum that supplies teachers with new resources and methods to meet state standards

The Benefits of Community-Based Support

Clearly the community-based curriculum renewal projects investigated in this case study increased cooperation and collaboration between the communities and the school districts. Increased cooperation and collaboration also led to the school districts and their communities better understanding each others' responsibilities, goals and aspirations. This, in turn, led to parents and other community members deriving numerous benefits from their curriculum renewal projects. It was not confined to only the students, the school, and the staff. The sites reported a total of eleven benefits:

- Improved collaboration and understanding
- Increased community unity that demonstrates a high level of caring for their high school students
- Improved family relations among parents and their students
- Improved communication

- Increased trust and rapport established
- Increased ownership in the project and its products
- Increased pride in high school students decreases their out-migration following graduation
- Maintenance of local control in curriculum renewal project
- Teaching of native language and other critical cultural elements
- Students, parents, and other community members have increased pride in school
- Community members wide use of the curriculum

Implementation Steps for a Community-Based Curriculum Renewal Program

Curriculum renewal is an ongoing process school districts are continually engaged in. Bringing together school and community efforts to effect curriculum renewal is no less engaging. All elements of the community must be involved in setting goals, providing services to students, and in monitoring the progress. Homes, communities, and schools are interdependent, and when they work together, students benefit. Below are listed steps taken from these case studies and other research that school districts and communities may use to guide the formation of their curriculum renewal partnership. (Stoops, 1992, Education Commission of the States, 1993).

- Step One: Identifying the need
- Step Two: Developing a planning process
- Step Three: Securing resources
- Step Four: Maintaining the momentum

Implications

Several general results occurred from the creation of the community-school partnerships which led each site's curriculum renewal efforts. They are, in actuality, community-wide effects that become a local infrastructure that may be used for future endeavors. These results are:

- Increased community problem solving
- Increased community innovation development
- Increased location and employment of local resources to meet project needs
- Increased community confidence in ability to solve local problems

The results listed above clearly indicate that these communities and their schools increased their local capacity to meet their curriculum renewal needs. The individually-listed results illustrate how these school districts and their communities organized their efforts, looked inward and used their own knowledge, skills, training, and other resources to solve their problems. These sites accomplished their curriculum renewal goals with a minimum of outside assistance. This is a worthy achievement. These schools and communities found solutions without relying totally on outside experts or thinking they could not do it without securing considerable amounts of outside resources. They did it themselves, and mostly with their own local resources. They tailored their projects to their community needs. These achievements allowed them to sustain valued elements of their culture and heritage which increased community ownership in their respective endeavors.

PREFACE

The concept and development of a series of curriculum renewal handbooks evolved through several phases. It first began when NWREL found more and more small, isolated, rural school districts facing the challenge of curriculum renewal with limited time, resources and expertise. This concern surfaced again when a regional needs assessment affirmed that curriculum renewal was of critical importance to the region's small, isolated school districts. NWREL's Rural Education Program subsequently identified alternative approaches effectively employed in the field for supporting curriculum renewal. Specifically, the use of consortia, teacher networks and community resources could help stretch scarce resources for curriculum improvement. The Rural Education Program next proposed to develop a series of handbooks describing the alternative strategies, technical assistance, and resource information small, isolated, rural school districts may utilize to effectively engage in curriculum renewal. For the purposes of the handbook series, the Rural Education Program defined curriculum renewal as follows:

> The process of those steps, procedures, and activities schools engage in to bring about change, modifications, refinement and improvement to the desired learner outcomes, materials, assessment procedures and instructional strategies. (Stoops, 1991, p.9)

An initial phase of this process began with a Curriculum Study Committee Conference held at NWREL in January, 1991. Seven regional educators representing state departments of education, rural education consortia, and educational service districts were asked to assist in meeting two objectives. NWREL desired input and discussion from these committee members about the alternative rural curriculum renewal models it had identified. Second, NWREL had decided to begin with the study of rural school consortia as a curriculum renewal model, and sought case study sites suitable for study. The Committee successfully met these purposes.

The second phase involved conducting a regional depiction study describing the status of curriculum renewal in small, isolated school districts. Completed in March of

1991, the depiction study examined issues of common concern and explored their implications for subsequent phases of the project. The major findings were:

- Curriculum change is viewed throughout the region as being particularly timely and deserves attention and allocation of resources to effect renewal
- Although many small, rural schools have confronted limitations to curriculum renewal efforts, many of them are unaware that promising approaches exist which address these limitations
- An important concern is not the further development of materials to meet standards or to strengthen curriculum. Rather, approaches are needed which stretch scarce resources to provide training, technical assistance, and opportunity for small, remote schools to build their capacity within the identified models. (Stoops, 1991)

The committee members, however, also strongly urged NWREL to develop first an additional handbook not originally considered. This first handbook serves as a guide to assist small, remote school districts to determine initially the status of curriculum renewal efforts in their districts. NWREL followed these suggestions and wrote Handbook One of the series. The handbook, *Curriculum Renewal in Small, Rural Schools--What is Involved?*, was published in the spring of 1992. Practitioners are encouraged to read this handbook first because it assists districts to analyze their level of planning for curriculum renewal efforts before deciding which approach is best for them.

For the remaining handbooks in the series, NWREL initiated an annual review process involving members of the curriculum support committee. The committee meets yearly in NWREL offices to discuss case study site locations, and format and content suggestions for each of the handbooks. Committee members and NWREL staff agree on case study sites. Then NWREL staff conduct the case studies and present committee members with a rough draft of each handbook for their field review. Each handbook in the series is primarily developed from field interview data, curriculum support committee member input and field review.

For handbook two, *The Use of Consortia to Engage in Curriculum Renewal*, published in August 1992, committee members had several recommendations. They

suggested that it address the following: interactions of member school districts, consortium funding, governance, the role of teachers, administrators and the consortium-appointed curriculum director, and the results of the consortium model to effect curriculum renewal. Five case study sites were visited: Union-Wallowa County Consortium in northeastern Oregon, The Blue Mountain Small Schools Consortium in southeastern Washington, The Silver Valley Vocational Education Cooperative in northern Idaho, the Southwest Region and Dillingham, Alaska, School District's Cooperative in southwestern Alaska, and the South Central Curriculum Cooperative in south-central Montana.

For handbook three, *The Use of Peer-Based Support in Rural Settings to Effect Curriculum Renewal*, published in September 1993, curriculum support members and NWREL staff discussed the meaning of the phrase *peer-based support*. Those in attendance at the meeting agreed that *peer-based support* refers to the curriculum renewal work of professional teacher networks in small, rural school districts. Therefore, in handbook three, professional teacher networks is utilized throughout as the synonym for *peer-based support*.

Five professional teacher networks were identified and visited to gather interview data for handbook three. The five visited networks are: the Alaskan Teacher Researcher Network (ATRN) in Juneau, Alaska; the Big Sky Telegraph teacher network in Dillon, Montana; the Bitterroot Teachers' Network in Moscow, Idaho; the Lane County Science and Mathematics Teachers' Cadre in Eugene, Oregon; and the Washington Council of Teachers of Mathematics (WCTM) in Kennewick, Washington.

With regard to handbook four, *The Use of Community-Based Support To Effect Curriculum Renewal in Rural Settings*, published in November 1994, curriculum support committee members and NWREL staff identified sites in which community members provided critical resources for their school district's curriculum renewal efforts. In each of these sites, community involvement was vital to the success of the curriculum renewal

endeavors. Five school districts and communities were visited to gather interview data for handbook four: Alaska-Gateway School District in Tok, Alaska; Meadows Valley School District in New Meadows, Idaho; Scobey School District in Scobey, Montana, Pinehurst School District in Pinehurst, Oregon; and Quileute Tribal School in La Push, Washington.

COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORT

Rural areas are characterized by much more willingness to cooperate and help one another than are their urban counterparts. Stoops and Hull (1993) reported that rural community residents held an attitude of expecting to help their neighbors, relatives, and friends. These authors found that rural community residents simply expected to take direct action if they felt it was called for. Stoops and Hull also identified the following characteristics of rural community living:

- Rural communities do not have the breadth of formal resources found in urban centers. Linkages for accessing regional resources are difficult to establish.
- Relationships tend to be on a personal rather than organizational basis. Informal rather than formal channels are used for accomplishing tasks. Friendships, personal trust, and personally-held values are primary variables.
- Factors of interpersonal relationships and visibility contribute to the accessibility of resources extant in the rural community. The visibility of natural helpers, informal relationships with other professionals, personal linkages with civic, fraternal, and other community organizations open possibilities for both direct and indirect service.
- The rural worker is separated from professional support systems and traditional agency supports (p.14).

Miller's (1991b) research supports these findings. He reported a higher level of community involvement in small, rural schools. "Because of isolation, limited resources, and low population density, community residents do more for their schools than might be expected in a metropolitan setting" (p.27). The school and community, therefore, become intertwined, almost symbiotic, particularly because of the interactions of school district staff and other community leaders who work together in community projects. This effective relationship of routinely assisting one another develops a braiding effect of rural community and school resources (Miller 1991a). This guide explores how such local community involvement has been used to support curriculum renewal in small, rural schools.

Although state governments hold the statutory responsibility to educate students, state funds are often so reduced and local resources so limited that it is increasingly more difficult to bring about effective school change in rural settings. Consequently, many small, rural schools simply lack adequate resources to engage effectively in curriculum renewal. In an effort to change these effects, the small, rural school districts and their community members investigated in this study are increasing their collaboration in curriculum renewal endeavors. These school districts and their communities have looked inward to identify and utilize available curriculum renewal resources. These sites, in essence, are developing their own capacity to engage in effective curriculum renewal. The small, rural school districts in this study found their community members particularly valuable for the following reasons:

- Community members may possess knowledge and other resources that enable the districts to meet new curriculum standards
- In small, rural school districts with limited and over-worked staff, some community members may have more time to lead curriculum renewal efforts
- Some community members may alone possess needed skills and training, or critical cultural and historical information necessary to lead new curriculum undertakings

In this study, there was a well defined and well working relationship between each community member or group and the school district with which they were collaborating. This relationship facilitated the identification of a specific curriculum renewal endeavor. In most occasions investigated for this handbook, community based curriculum renewal efforts were organized to meet a specific community or school district need. Two of the sites--La Push, Washington, and Scobey, Montana--were community-initiated curriculum renewal efforts; another two of the sites--New Meadows, Idaho and Pinehurst, Oregon--were meeting state directed reform measures; and in the last site--Tok, Alaska--The Alaska-Gateway School District approached parents and other community leaders for their participation and input. The following section describes in more detail these three approaches.

Community-Initiated Renewal

Why do school districts and communities collaborate in their curriculum renewal endeavors, and how does such a process get started? In the community-initiated approach, community members proposed collaborative efforts between school district staff and community members to meet an identified community need. Community members wanted certain conditions or circumstances changed and they made the initial move by bringing it to the school district's attention. Community members knew they needed assistance from the school district and asked the school district to collaborate with them in their curriculum renewal endeavors.

Scobey, Montana

In rural, northeastern Montana, community members and county residents were shocked when a local high school girl was killed in an alcohol-related car accident. The tragedy paralyzed the small town of Scobey where practically everyone knew the student and her family. Many parents realized that this calamity could have as easily involved one of their own children as it did their friend's. The event so traumatized community residents that they became convinced they had to work with the school to provide alternative "alcohol and drug free" teenage recreational activities. Parents, school district staff, and other community leaders were determined to take steps to prevent such a catastrophe occurring again. They developed and implemented a community alcohol and drug education program that taught their children the perils of substance abuse. Although this part of rural, isolated Montana has limited resources, community members created a successful alcohol and drug education program for their students. Scobey residents accomplished their primary goal by coordinating school and community resources to expand curricular and instructional offerings. High school Principal George Rider explains.

> At that time, Melanie worked for the drive-in and she went to a summer party. Alcohol was involved and Melanie was killed. I think the community saw that there was a real need to divert the attention of the youth to activities that do not

involve alcohol and drugs. Their purpose was to get together, do some education as far as drug and alcohol was concerned, and provide non-alcoholic activities for the kids.

The community was committed to take constructive action to prevent another teenager's death caused by alcohol abuse. Over 300 residents attended the first community-wide meeting held to determine what to do. Parent Candace Southland observed: "It was what people wanted, they saw it as something that needed to be addressed." In a follow-up to this meeting, the community members created a group they named The Rainbow Connection, composed of parents, teachers, and other community members who developed alcohol and drug free activities for their high school students. High school counselor Larry Wahl was the first head of The Rainbow Connection. Wahl describes their beginnings.

> We worked and worked and worked in the community doing alternative activities for the kids and that sort of thing. We kept our group going and kept meeting. We had parents and kids meeting together for the first couple of years. Then we ended up with a community group and a few teachers that would meet on Friday mornings at 6:00 a.m. When we finally got into the school system, things really started clicking.

Quileute Tribal School

La Push, Washington, the community center of the Quileute Indian Reservation, is located in the Olympic Peninsula, approximately 25 miles west of Forks. Six hundred twenty three (623) tribal members reside on this small reservation of only 923 acres (Bureau of Indian Affairs 1994). It is of increasing concern to tribal leaders that the number of members residing on the reservation has been steadily decreasing over the last two decades. Paralleling the decrease in tribal members is a similar decrease in the number of tribal elders fluent in the original Quileute language and knowledgeable about other core elements of their culture. The remaining elders and members of The Elders Committee were very concerned that the tribe would soon forget its language and other vital parts of its culture. Since none of the young adults, and especially the students, knew

the language, the elders feared its use would not continue with the younger generation. They felt that teaching the language in the tribal school would remedy this situation.

All concerns about Quileute culture must come from The Elder's Committee and have its approval before the tribe will consider taking action. The Elders approved teaching the language in the school because they wanted their language preserved and passed on to the next generation. The elders also wanted other core elements of their culture taught in the school. Roger Jackson, Chairman of the School Board of Directors explains.

> The major concerns that the community and the elders had in the beginning [of the community-based program] was mainly preserving and teaching the language. The second thing the community wanted preserved was the culture, meaning the drumming, singing, and the dancing.

Roy Black, a "young" elder at age 57, describes the reason the community began re-teaching the language and other parts of their culture.

> We thought it was very important that we do preserve the language because it was dying. And my generation of people had got that taken away from us when we went to the public schools, which was kind of the downfall of the educational system, as far as I'm concerned.

Summary

Although both of these curriculum renewal endeavors were begun at the behest of one or several community members, their purposes differed considerably. In Scobey, Montana, many residents viewed a community tragedy as a crisis threatening their high school students. This event prompted efforts to implement a community-initiated curriculum renewal model. Parents and other community members felt they needed to take immediate steps to reverse their students' use of drugs and alcohol. In La Push, Washington, some residents also viewed their circumstances as being critical, albeit not at the crisis level felt in Montana. Nonetheless, these community members felt that a change was vital to the future of their students and community. The change they recommended required an infusion of cultural knowledge and skills known only by a few community

elders. Tribal elders felt they needed to take the initiative in their community-led curriculum renewal effort to preserve their heritage. Common to both sites, however, was the fact that community members identified a problem, or a set of problems, discussed it with their peers, completed some planning, and subsequently led their community's respective efforts.

State Directed Reform

With regard to state directed reform, key community members provide the necessary resources of time, skills, knowledge, and energy to lead their school district's curriculum renewal efforts. These sites involve school districts who were experiencing difficulties in meeting new state mandated reform measures. They are small, remote school districts with limited resources, including more often than not, over extended staff required to perform many diverse tasks. Community members who assumed leadership positions were necessary for these school districts to satisfy their new state-mandated curriculum standards.

Pinehurst School District

Pinehurst, Oregon, is a very small community located in the southern Cascade Mountain Range approximately 22 miles east of Ashland. Pinehurst School District experienced difficulties locating skilled educators to help it implement new state curriculum standards. The new curriculum standards of the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) were proving very difficult for small, rural school districts such as Pinehurst. Meeting the standards also included a demanding site visit in which district personnel had to demonstrate to ODE staff where and how they had met the new standards. It was much more involved than simply completing a state form and sending it to the ODE offices in the state capital.

In Pinehurst's situation, complete curriculum documents had to be written, staff had to be trained, and necessary curriculum materials purchased. It proved to be a daunting task. The three full-time member teaching staff was overextended, and the one

administrator only worked part time. School staff simply lacked sufficient time after meeting its daily teaching and administrative responsibilities to assist with such a curriculum renewal project. The district had a deadline to meet and it was not making progress. A skilled educator was needed who knew the school district and the community well enough to complete this task without taking away valuable teacher time. This individual also had to be very familiar with curriculum and instructional issues and possess the necessary writing skills to compose new curriculum documents. Marge Frank, community member, parent, and former educator, volunteered her services to assist the district. School district administrator Jim Titus describes how Marge Frank was selected to lead these efforts.

> There were things that we were doing that we knew were right and we were meeting the standards, but we didn't have the proof of it written down on paper. We didn't see anyone, once again, from outside the community who knew this district intimately enough to sit down and do that job for us without taking a whole lot of teacher time and input to tell someone what we were doing. Marge, by that time, had been fairly closely involved in what was going on in the school. And, she is a certified teacher.

The Pinehurst School District Board of Directors and administrator learned quickly that the Oregon Department of Education's approach to this cycle of curriculum standardization was much more demanding than what had been required previously. The board of directors visited a neighboring school district which had recently completed its standardization site visit. The board members wanted more details of what was involved when the Oregon Department of Education site teams conducted a visit. The host school shared the process and results with the Pinehurst board members. Advised that the preparation was complex and time consuming, they learned that they needed someone practically full time to prepare the district. None of the teachers volunteered for the task, and they made it clear that they did not want to take time away from their classroom responsibilities for something this demanding. The school board could have hired someone from outside the district but it preferred to have a community member attend to

this task rather than hire someone unfamiliar with Pinehurst. Sam Alvord, member of the board of directors explains the school board's rationale.

> It was real clear, once we got launched, that we didn't need an outsider. It was obvious that Marge was fully capable of doing this task and that her plan would work. She delegated as much as she could. It was all kind of an in-house operation. Lots of people in the community had some involvement, though it was limited. She (Frank) controlled it, and she didn't over stress anybody.

Pinehurst was seeking someone knowledgeable in current curriculum and instructional issues, skilled in writing curriculum documents, and able to communicate effectively with school board, community, staff members, students, and parents. Foremost, Pinehurst School District wanted someone who knew the community and whom the community knew. The district felt it was inefficient for an outsider to come into their community and take school personnel's limited time interviewing for information to document in the curriculum materials. Marge Frank, a resident, was a valuable community resource who already knew most of what a consultant would be asking of staff and board members. Equally important, she was very capable of completing this project for the school district. A former board member herself, she knew parents, other community members, and the students. Furthermore, she was familiar with school district management and operations, and held the confidence of the school district staff.

Meadows Valley (Idaho) School District

Meadows Valley School District is located in New Meadows, Idaho, approximately 100 miles north of Boise and 11 miles west of McCall on State Highway 95. New Meadows is situated in a particularly beautiful part of the state near Lake Payette. This is a year-round recreational area, with expensive resorts and homes lining the shores of the lake and dotting nearby hills and mountains. Although New Meadows shares some of the economic benefits from the recreational opportunities the area provides, the rest of its economy is agricultural and forestry based.

Meadow Valley's curriculum renewal effort was established in response to the Idaho Department of Education's National Goals 2000 Program. The school district received a state grant to implement a performance-based education program based on the state's National Goals 2000 Program. School officials knew that the community would be much more receptive to school change if community members had an extensive role in the process. Concerned by previous community criticism for not adequately involving parents or other community members in school activities, the district now sought to reverse that sentiment. Elementary Head Teacher Bonnie Thompson explains the district's approach.

> When I came here three years ago, parents didn't feel very welcome in the school. Because of this we tried, with this project, to come in on a positive basis, with an open door policy and get the public involved. We wanted to show them that it is their school, their education and their children. They need to have input. This project gave us a perfect opportunity to do it.

Holly Thrash appeared to the school district to be the ideal parent and community member to chair the community-based committee. She had been spending some time at the school talking to district administrators about her concerns over the use of standardized tests. Expressing these concerns frequently brought Thrash to the school where she became more acquainted with administrators and teachers. When the school district received the performance-based education grant from the Idaho Department of Education, the school district asked her to chair the oversight committee. Holly describes the process whereby she was offered the position of chairperson of this committee.

> The reasoning was because I was an involved parent, the district wanted to utilize my high visibility. This indicated that there was someone from the community and not just the school staff or district or whatever who was interested and to hopefully show other community members that this change wasn't just something that the school was initiating. The school wanted to show that there were parents involved in these different aspects of school operations.

Having a parent chair this important school committee gave the school district added credibility within the community. In addition, it showed that community members could develop ownership in school renewal activities. The district hoped that, along with the ownership, would come community buy-in, increased acceptance, and greater community participation in the project.

Summary

Both of these sites were striving to meet reform measures promoted or mandated by their respective state departments of education. Pinehurst School District's task was considerably more structured and demanding than was Meadows Valley School District's. The Oregon Department of Education had re-initiated site visits to school districts as an integral part of their standardization process. New curriculum documents in practically all content areas had to be written within state guidelines, and implemented prior to the site visit. During the site visit, state officials interviewed students, parents, other community members, teachers, administrators, and school board members about the school district's use of the new curriculum documents. Meeting the new curriculum standardization requirements was very demanding and stressful for Pinehurst. Had it not been for community member Marge Frank's expertise and leadership, the task would have been considerably more difficult for the school district.

When Idaho wrote its Action Plan, **Schools For 2000 and Beyond**, the state legislature appropriated $950,000 to begin implementing the report's recommendations. Meadows Valley received a pilot project grant to implement a performance-based system, identified in the Action Plan as a priority reform area. A necessary part of receiving the grant was meeting the objectives identified in **Schools For 2000 and Beyond**. Parents and community members' volunteer participation and involvement has been critical to

meeting these objectives. Their work at Meadows Valley, under Holly Thrash's guidance established a viable partnership between the community and the school district.

School Initiated Renewal

The school district employing this approach made a concerted effort to secure parent and other community members' knowledge and infuse it into new or existing curriculum. Community adults provide an invaluable resource of knowledge and skills that enrich the new curriculum for their students. The difference with this approach is that the district identifies and initiates contact with community members. This is not done to meet state standards or to satisfy a state department of education site visitation. Rather, it is a strategy the school utilizes to enhance student performance. Imbedding community-designed student outcomes into curriculum areas adds a dimension of reality which strengthens school-community relations. Furthermore, it is a powerful method to demonstrate the value the school holds for community-based knowledge and expertise.

Alaska-Gateway School District

The Alaska-Gateway School District is situated in Tok, approximately 200 miles southeast of Fairbanks. Located in the interior section of Alaska, the Tok area often experiences some of the coldest weather in the state during the winter months. In the other seasons, however, this area is temperate and very popular to outdoor enthusiasts who hire local guides for hunting, fishing, or camping trips. Connected to Fairbanks by a major state highway and with commuter airplane service, residents routinely travel to Fairbanks and even to Anchorage.

The Alaska-Gateway School District needed to update its health and science curriculum and wanted parents and other community members to articulate the outcomes for these two program areas. District administrators and teachers felt they would have more community support and ownership in these programs if some parents and other community members were an integral part of the curriculum development process. Superintendent Spike Jorgenson explains the value of this approach.

> In order for the school district to develop the curriculum, it has to know what the community wants and the basic purpose of this approach was to communicate to our faculty the community's perception of the kids' needs.

School faculty also wanted to have the community knowledge and expertise available in the classroom to expand their students' learning experiences. Community elders and other leaders possess considerable knowledge and skills unavailable elsewhere that they may teach to the students. Teacher Larry Bartman reports his thoughts on the use of community members.

> There is a lot of untapped knowledge that the elders could pass on to the kids that could be used in modern science classrooms. We use this approach now. We inherited the program; it was started before we arrived.

Summary

Involving parents and other community members in developing new curriculum materials increases their credibility and utility with both teachers and students. Faculty and community members who comprised the curriculum committees wanted classroom teachers to use the new materials. They did not want the teachers to put the new curriculum on the shelf and then continue using what they had. Involving parents and community members in determining student outcomes provided the teachers with high utility curriculum materials. Teachers preferred using locally-developed curriculum materials rather than textbooks or other form of published materials with an imbedded set of outcomes that hold little relevance for the students.

Summary of Community-Based Support

These curriculum renewal efforts became, in effect, ongoing, ad hoc endeavors created to meet community and school district goals. Each site initially had identified its major purpose(s), had built a support base of relationships, had formed a school improvement team, and some had even begun to negotiate for needed resources. It was at this time that the sites encountered difficulties--each one lacked adequate resources to complete their identified curriculum renewal project. Either the school district or the

community needed assistance with their projects, they were unable to continue them alone. However, it was not always a lack of funding that these sites faced. Obviously, during the various implementation phases, fiscal resources were critical to the completion of these projects. They simply were not initially always the most important of resources. Some of these schools lacked the knowledge and skills to teach their native language, or other valued elements of their culture and heritage. In one of the sites, a community member was the most qualified to be the school district's volunteer curriculum director and lead its curriculum standardization efforts. In another, a village elder was one of a small number of residents fluent in the native language. She became the head teacher and taught other adults and students in this community's efforts to relearn its language. Community-led efforts involving individuals such as these mentioned here were vital for these school districts and communities to complete their curriculum renewal projects.

Interview data reveal the development of three community-based curriculum renewal approaches that are similar in design yet contain subtle operational differences. The first is a community-initiated approach in which community members propose change(s) in the school district's current curriculum and instructional offerings. In this approach, the community makes the first move to bring about change in the school. The second approach is state-directed reform, in which the school district solicits the use of community-based resources such as time, knowledge, and expertise to lead the school district's efforts to achieve state-mandated reform measures. Unlike the community-initiated approach, the school district makes the first move and asks key community members for their assistance. In this effort, one or more community members play significant roles in the school district's efforts to meet state curriculum standards. The third approach, school-initiated curriculum renewal, is one in which the school district starts the change process. The school district identifies community-held resources and seeks community members to assist in their curriculum renewal endeavors. The school district attempts to use extant resources community members possess such as knowledge

about particular cultural phenomena or little known life skills that will enrich students' classroom experiences.

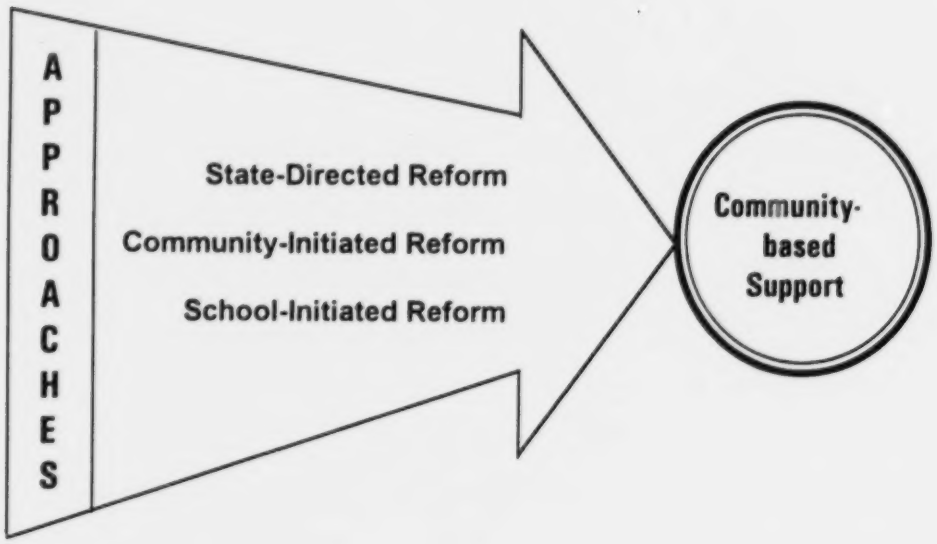
The key differences among the three approaches are the factors that drive their development. For example, in approach number one, community members approach the school and say, "This is what we want or need." "We would like the school to assist or play a major role in bringing it about." In approach number two, state departments of education say, "Our public schools need to engage in major reform efforts--we will establish some guidelines to assist them," and school districts subsequently look to the community for leadership or other forms of assistance. In approach number three, the school district says ,"We're going to make these changes, and we will ask the community to help." The important difference between models two and three is that in model three the school district initiates the change rather than the state department(s) of education. A similarity with both of these approaches is that the school looks to the community for needed resources. Regardless, however, of the subtle etiology of these approaches, the community-based support each district relied upon was responsible for the success of its curriculum renewal efforts.

Table 1 lists the different approaches employed at each case study site. Figure 1 portrays how the community initiated, the state directed reform, and the school initiated curriculum renewal approaches, while differing operationally, are nonetheless, all community-based curriculum renewal endeavors.

Table 1: Approaches of Community-Based Support to Effect Curriculum Renewal

Community Initiated	State Directed Reform	School Initiated
Scobey School District Quileute Tribal School	Pinehurst School District Meadows Valley School District	Alaska-Gateway School District

Figure 1: Community-Based Curriculum Renewal



IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED CURRICULUM RENEWAL PROJECTS

This section describes how the five case study sites implemented and operated their community-based curriculum renewal projects. Each site investigated in this study indicated a strong collaborative effort between the local community and the school district. Interview data repeatedly stressed that the sites' curriculum renewal efforts depended on such collaboration. Respondents also emphasized that neither the school nor the community could attain their curriculum renewal goals alone.

Although general similarities exist among the different case study sites, there are important differences in each site's daily operations. Each community-based project was created for an explicit purpose and participants set goals and developed specific strategies to achieve their goals. Furthermore, for the most part, each school-community partnership was loosely organized. None of the sites was highly structured with elected officers, specific task assignments, or even task descriptions. Each of the sites, however, did hold regular organizational meetings in which goals and strategies were discussed, agreed upon, and progress toward meeting them was monitored.

Scobey, Montana

Scobey, Montana's community-based curriculum renewal project is organized around the activities of three groups which collaborate to effect a drug and alcohol-free environment for their students. The three groups which assume leadership activities for the community and the school are The Rainbow Connection, The Drug Free School Program, and the Insight Program. Although each of the three groups has a somewhat different role, none of them formally guides or directs any other group's efforts. The Rainbow Connection and The Drug Free School Program are preventive approaches designed to educate students, parents, and other community members about the perils of drug and alcohol abuse. The Insight Program is a commercially-produced curriculum

taught in the school district that staff must be trained to teach. The program assists, educates, and counsels those students known to be using drugs and alcohol.

Community-Led Efforts

Parents, other community members, and students join committees or sub-committees of one or more of these groups created to meet organizational goals or to complete agreed upon tasks. In fact, participants may belong to two or more groups simultaneously and serve on related committees and be liaisons among the three groups. The collaboration among the members of The Rainbow Connection, The Drug Free School Program, and the Insight Program committees is such that now they blend their operations to best meet students' and families' needs. Ann Roberts, Social Services Director of the Scobey Hospital and Nursing Home, explains.

> It's a combination of teachers, community people, concerned parents, and we all have different things we do. We aren't all facilitators in Insight. We have different functions but we're basically there for the kids, to show them that they do have people who care about them.

The fundamental difference between these three programs, however, is that The Rainbow Connection primarily provides out of school activities and services for parents and students. Very little is conducted during the school day. Committee members feel it is advantageous to have a community-based group that attends to the community's needs separate from school district operations. This perspective, however, does not diminish the focus on students and the school environment. Student and school needs are not overlooked; The Drug Free School and Insight Programs curricula attend to these needs during the school day and on the school campus.

Although the three groups are closely connected through the coordination of their various activities, The Rainbow Connection clearly initiated the community-led involvement with the school district. As described earlier, community members organized this committee following the tragic death of a local teenager. The organization of this committee became the springboard for the creation of the other committees. Parents,

community members, and teachers all participate in the three committees. For the school led activities, however, teachers and administrators take a more active role in planning and implementing the curriculum and instructional delivery. The community and school-wide focus did not gain impetus, however, until The Rainbow Connection was organized and convinced the school district to collaborate and coordinate their joint efforts. When the school district realized that the community supported collaborative efforts in the drug and alcohol program paralleled its own program goals, it agreed to coordinating their efforts. The increased community support and service coordination has had a positive effect on the school district staff and the students. Teacher Debbie Kibbe explains.

> My real understanding of when I felt like it was beginning to move was when The Rainbow Connection got going. It moved through the school very rapidly. The school, of course, had already had a drug education process within each of the classrooms, but there wasn't a whole lot of community intervention. I feel that the organization of The Rainbow Connection really started the community doing it with us for a change.

Finances

A turning point in the effectiveness of the program occurred when The Rainbow Connection was financially able to send students to summer drug and alcohol education camps. Not only did these students benefit from the summer session programs, but they also were resources for community members, parents, and most importantly, for other students. The value of this approach soon became obvious to everyone. However, securing adequate revenue to send enough students to the camps to be effective among their peers was difficult. Creating revenue sources adequate to meet this need was no easy task.

The school district recognized the value of the summer camps and wanted to assist but lacked the necessary funding to pay for the students' tuition. The Rainbow Connection assumed the responsibility of raising the necessary revenue for this vital part of their community-wide anti-drug and alcohol educational program. The committee began organizing several fund raising activities. Selling fried bread at all community and

school activities soon became a popular as well as a profit making venture. Another fund raiser parents and community members have traditionalized is the selling of fresh fruit during the winter holiday season. This event has been repeated for several years and now is quite popular. Furthermore, participation in the fresh fruit drive has double benefits. Families, other community members, and businesses enjoy having the fresh fruit in the middle of winter and the profit the Rainbow Connection derives from the sales provides a dependable source of needed revenues.

The school district recently qualified for a drug free program grant dispensed through Montana's Office of Public Instruction. School district counselor Larry Wahl manages the grant and each year the district receives a new grant application from the state. Montana receives the revenues from the federal government and funds those school districts who are awarded grants. The school district receives the grant funds quarterly which are used to meet a variety of drug and alcohol-related community and educational objectives. For example, Wahl has used grant monies for activities that promote chemical and substance abuse awareness in the school and with community members who work with students. This is a preventive approach the district has used with another Montana High School Drug Awareness Program named AIM Higher. Service clubs and fraternal organizations such as the Lions and the Masons also donate money to school district and community activities.

The Rainbow Connection does not write a budget, or not a formal one, at least. Their primary funding obligation is sending students and adults to summer camp and teachers to Insight Program training. The committee sets an annual goal to raise enough funds to pay for the cost of as many teachers they plan to have trained, and for as many students it agrees to send to summer camp that year. Parent Candace Southland describes the process.

> It costs $425 for each adult and $325 for each student to go to summer camp and we will raise money in The Rainbow Connection food stands and use Drug Free Schools money. A lot of times we will give money for adults and kids going. We

> don't have a formal budget. We just know that if we want to send 10 kids to camp, then we have to have over $3250 to do it.

The school district is now able to support the drug and alcohol educational program in some critical ways. First, it provides indirect support by allowing The Rainbow Connection to use facilities, equipment and some materials at no cost to the community group. Second, the district awards $200 stipends to teachers who undergo summer Insight Program training to prepare for teaching the curriculum to those students who have been engaged in substance abuse. The combination of these different funding sources and forms of resource sharing allows the different groups to coordinate their efforts into an integrated program for their needy students and families.

Goal Setting and Decision Making

Each of the committees actively involved in drug and alcohol education and prevention control has between 10 to 15 members and meets monthly. Group work among the committee members is very collegial and decisions are reached through a consensual process. Goal setting and decision making is conducted on an informal basis actively engaging the whole group in the process.

The Drug Free School Committee is a good example of how all three committees make decisions and agree on goals. It is composed of a cross section of community members. For example, the town physician, druggist, county sheriff, business owners, parents, teachers, school administrators, counselors, students and any other interested individuals belong. School counselor Larry Wahl chairs the committee and coordinates its school-related activities with the Insight Committee. Wahl describes some of the decisions this group makes.

> We regularly meet once a month and conduct all of the business. We make decisions on the Drug Free School activities and coordinate it with the Insight Program course offerings. We decide how many kids we're going to send to camp and what we should spend our money on, and what activities we're going to have.

Wahl's chairmanship of the Drug Free School Committee gives this committee some added benefits. Managing the Drug Free School grant along with his counseling

position and training give him considerable leadership experience he uses to facilitate the committee's work and to assist other committee members. Teacher Connie Wittak describes this dimension of Wahl's responsibility.

> Those who facilitate deal with the conflict or problems that arise with the teenage users. And I would say we rely a lot on Larry (Wahl). I look to Larry a lot simply because he's been there so much in the past. He has so much experience.

The atmosphere in committee meetings is sufficiently relaxed that committee members don't hesitate to make suggestions and proposals to the entire group about the budget or program offerings. The group openly discusses these topics and then makes a decision. These suggestions often come in meetings after something has happened to a student or a family committee members know. The committee meeting format is an exchange of ideas that focuses more on remediation than it does on prevention. Although this approach is somewhat informal and unstructured, it is effective with committee members. Consensus is observed and little railroading of personal agenda items occurs. Teacher Debbie Kibbe and Superintendent Dustin Hill explain.

> We determine our goals and make decisions as a group. We sit down together and hash them out and we decide what we need to do next. I don't think anyone has any more say than anyone else. It's pretty much a group decision.

> Goals are determined primarily by consensus. People bring ideas in, they toss them around, and they determine to do something. It's a fairly loose knit, but yet they pull these things off.

It is common for some members of one committee to also belong to the other two committees. This multiple membership facilitates the coordination of the committees' service delivery efforts. During the meetings, members make decisions involving their particular committee in anticipation of what they feel another committee will do. For example, suppose a high school student is caught under the influence of drugs at a school event. The Insight Program committee will enroll this student into one of its classes. Following this, community members could ask The Rainbow Connection to allocate funds

to send this student's parents to a summer camp teaching them how to cope with children abusing drugs and alcohol.

Summary

There are three community and school committees providing drug and alcohol substance abuse education and assistance to Scobey, Montana students and community members. The three committees coordinate their efforts and collaborate to provide a service delivery approach that serves the entire family. Committee operations occur in a setting involving all members in which decisions are agreed to consensually. The committees offer an expanded range of services for students who are abusing drugs or alcohol, for their parents, and for other family members which include:

- A remediation emphasis through the efforts of the Insight Program and some operations of The Rainbow Connection
- A preventive emphasis through The Rainbow Connection training sessions, and The Drug Free School curriculum
- A community-wide follow-up emphasis led by the three committees

The committees employ these services to educate students and their families about the perils of drug and alcohol abuse. Their primary objective is to educate students to make good decisions relative to their personal drug and alcohol use.

La Push, Washington

A group of tribal elders and school officials organize, operate, and monitor the Quileute Tribal School's community-based curriculum renewal project. Much of the early planning among elders, community members and school district staff begins at community meals or a potluck dinner. The elders are present to preserve tribal customs and culture. Parents and other community members listen and express their opinions about the upcoming community and school activities. These are very friendly social events. Afterwards, tribal elders and school officials meet and conduct more detailed planning

sessions to set short- and long-range goals. School board member Helen Harrison describes this activity joining the community and the school.

> The gathering of the community and the staff seems to be like a family. They not only get involved with the school, but the school also gets more involved with the community. So it works both ways. The school also works with the community.

Community-Led Efforts

The school assisted in organizing the community project. Terry Tavenner, tribal school culture coordinator, identified elders (there were only two) fluent in the Quileute language. The Quileute is a little used Native American language. The Hoh Reservation, just south of La Push, is the only other location in which this language is spoken, and few fluent Native speakers live there as well. Since the school was able to locate only two fluent Native speakers in La Push, it became even more imperative to elders and parents to preserve the language by teaching it in the school.

Tavenner, with the superintendent's approval, organized a teaching schedule detailing when one of the two elders comes to school and teaches the language. The elders wanted the language taught in the classroom because students no longer meet with their grandparents at home to learn the language, culture, or the life style that their grandparents grew up with. The school was the one place in which the elders and the students could meet, and teaching and learning could take place much as it once did. Tavenner explains.

> The people (tribal members) saw just how devastating it was for the kids to be out of touch with the language and culture. So they took the chance to bring it back and to teach it in the classroom, because kids weren't going to the traditional places; they weren't sitting around fires anymore with their grandparents. One of our key points was to have the elders bring grandparents and the grandkids together.

A long-held tribal custom was for the elders to bring children together with their grandparents and teach them the language and other important parts of their heritage such as fishing, canoeing, wood carving, and inter and intra-family relationships. In earlier times, it was also expected that every adult held a parenting responsibility for each child in

the tribe. This community-based renewal project began observing that custom again Tavenner describes the philosophy grounding this custom.

> Family is very important, yet the children are the future, and so the child before you is your own. If you're in a position to teach that child, then you need to pass on those skills and share that. Another key issue has been deciding where we are headed together with agreement on what we want our children to do. Each of us adults has a piece in that.

The community is small, the school sits in the middle of the community and is an integral part of it. Tribal elders and school staff invite community participation in their cultural program. As an illustration, if a community member tells school officials that (s)he thinks they are incorrectly teaching a skill, for example, repairing fish nets, they invite this individual to teach the skill the way (s)he was taught. This open approach of total community involvement in teaching their culture is now common knowledge. All community members are invited to participate in teaching any aspect of their culture if they feel they have a better understanding of what is being taught than the current teacher.

Local language and cultural elements are infused into existing curriculum. The Council of Elders is the advisory group that assists the school in identifying content it wants added to existing curriculum. The Council identified 96 Quileute cultural elements it recommended infusing into the adopted curriculum. The elders and the school staff then worked together to develop new curriculum that reflects these elements of the Quileute culture. These additions effected health, social studies, language arts, science, and culture program areas.

Finances

Much of the funds supporting the cultural enrichment program come from a three year Title V grant which the school regularly reapplies for. Superintendent Frank Hanson and Terry Tavenner manage the grants and do the re-application writing. This funding pays for the operational costs of staff, materials, student transportation, some food, and expenses that the elders and other community members may incur. At this time, there are no community funds available to assist with the program, but the school does receive a

small $7,500 state grant from Washington's Bureau of Alcohol and Substance Abuse. These funds are used, when applicable, with the Title V grant funds.

Goal Setting and Decision Making

The school's Board of Directors makes the final decisions about the cultural program. However, the board does consider recommendations from the Council of Elders, the professional staff, parents, and other community members. These groups regularly discuss cultural curriculum items in their meetings which become the basis for the recommendations they take to the board. The goal setting and decision-making process is pretty informal and open to anyone who wants to make a recommendation to the board of directors. The board, however, is the only body with the legal responsibility to approve such curriculum matters. Cultural Coordinator Terry Tavenner explains the process.

> It's all volunteer and the meetings are open to everyone, you don't necessarily have to be an elder to be there to conduct business. The board sets priorities on what kind of curriculum they developed and they try to meet them. The Board of Directors has to set the curriculum standards. They have to approve what's in the curriculum.

Summary

This small, isolated school identifies and draws knowledgeable and respected community members into its classrooms to teach and preserve the community's culture. This arrangement has developed a partnership between the school and the community that works quite well. A primary reason is that the school has replaced the home or the traditional fishing or camping sites in which elders and grandparents earlier taught their children vital language and cultural skills. As a result, this partnership has synthesized the past with the future. The school, an important vehicle to prepare youth for the 21st century, has now also become the center for promoting and maintaining treasured elements of the Quileute culture.

Pinehurst, Oregon

Pinehurst School District's community-based curriculum renewal project centered around the efforts of its part-time volunteer and part-time contracted curriculum consultant, Marge Frank. Frank is a well-known member of the community, a former board member, a parent volunteer, and an educational consultant and writer. As described earlier, the school district was looking for a competent local educator to direct its efforts to meet the demanding new state administrative standards. Marge Frank fit the bill.

Community-Led Efforts

Frank and the Pinehurst School District Board of Directors negotiated a contract in which the board hired her as an consultant to lead the district's standardization efforts. The board gave Frank considerable latitude to discharge her responsibilities. She was authorized to write the district's new curriculum documents, represent the district at standardization meetings the state department of education sponsored, and to make decisions for the school district which included committing some of its resources. Because of the many differing responsibilities involved, this position became very demanding and time consuming. It soon was apparent that the school district could not afford to pay for all of the work Frank completed. As a result, she ended up volunteering approximately three-fourths of her time to lead the district's standardization efforts. Frank explains.

> We realized we needed to totally revamp the curriculum, the way it was written. There was a lot of good stuff (teaching) going on but it wasn't written down. I started by taking one standard at a time and went to all of the standards workshops. I read all of the OARs (Oregon Administrative Rules) and the ORSs (Oregon Revised Statutes) and tried to learn everything that I could. I realized I couldn't do this unless I dropped everything else I was doing.

Oregon's Department of Education identified 37 standards that school districts had to achieve. Of the 37, Pinehurst felt that curriculum was the most demanding since almost every other standard connected in one manner or other with curriculum. Frank was committed to keeping the teachers actively engaged in the process. She believed their

ownership was critical to the district implementing the new curriculum once it was written. In pursuit of this goal, she met with the teachers weekly. In these meetings, Frank provided updates on her activities, information on what the state department of education was doing with other school districts around the state, and time for the teachers to express their opinions about the process. Frank felt it was vital to continually seek and utilize the teachers' input.

From the outset, it was very important to the board of directors, administrator, teachers, and parents that they maintain those specific characteristics or attributes that make Pinehurst School special and different. In other words, they did not want the new standardization efforts to change Pinehurst School into something different from what these individuals knew it to be. This was an overarching goal that guided Frank when she wrote all of the curriculum documents required to meet the standardization mandate. Board of Directors member Jeanne Randall explains.

> The community, board, and staff, at some process early on in the standardization got together and asked, 'What is it that we want the flavor of Pinehurst School to be? What is it we want our school to be?' And we kind of made some major decisions, primarily in the area of really wanting a much more integrated, thematic approach, an all-school approach to learning. We said we don't want to lose the flavor of what we had as a very, very small school in which the kids interacted a lot together.

Finances

The Pinehurst School District Board of Directors took an active leadership role in providing funding to pay for the added costs incurred in meeting the new standardization requirements. The board built these costs into the school budget after being advised in advance how much they would be. The board members felt they had allocated a small amount compared to what some professional consultants had bid for similar services. Board member Sam Alvord explains the board's rationale.

> These costs struck us as minimal compared to the kinds of quotations we got as to what it would cost to bring in a professional curriculum developer, or if we hire a

full-time curriculum developer. And, we simply could not afford to pay for a full-time curriculum director.

The board was especially sensitive to the teachers' new responsibilities which were added to their regular teaching duties. Because staff participation was vital to effecting change, the board wanted to ensure that the teachers did not feel this latest state mandate was simply another "add on" to their primary responsibility of teaching. The board especially did not want the staff to think this effort would have no lasting impact on their instruction. In light of this, the district began an inservice program designed to train the teachers about the new state common curriculum goals they had to infuse into the new curriculum documents. Frank describes how the board provided some release and workshop time for the new training.

> We only have three teachers, but when we needed to we hired substitutes so the teachers could have time to work. Although they (teachers) were given extra time it wasn't enough to cover what all they did. But it did help them, I think, feel like they were being rewarded for some of these things.

The allocation of school district funds to pay the costs of the standardization improvements was a particular concern to a few community members. Funds to pay Frank, purchase necessary materials, and provide the teachers with some release time, came through the district's regular budget process. The school district received no additional state funds or grant monies to assist with the project. The board defended the budgetary increases needed to fund this project to some community members who questioned their necessity. However, even after these attempts, some members of the community did not support the district's efforts. Some community members were critical of the district spending the money it did to meet the state standards. Board member Jeanne Randall describes some of the opposition the board encountered.

> People would look at that segment of the budget that was going to have to be set aside for the standardization and a lot of them could think of a lot of other better things we could be doing with that money. So I don't think the community, as a whole, felt as though the process was necessarily a valuable or a worthwhile activity. I don't think the board or staff shared that view.

Goal Setting and Decision Making

Frank worked closely with the Pinehurst School District Board of Directors who supported her completely throughout the various phases she led the district while meeting the standardization requirements. Frank kept the board fully apprised of the district's progress. The Board of Directors made all policy decisions and assisted in setting the goals for their curriculum renewal project. The board assisted because many of the goals were agreed upon after allowing teachers, parents, and other community members to express their views. Decisions were made on a consensual basis among the participants. Frank completed most of the leg work obtaining information about events, curriculum documents, or training sessions that she or another district representatives should attend. She followed up these efforts by attending every monthly board meeting and giving the board a status report on the current situation. In addition, she would often submit a proposal to the board on what direction the district should take to satisfy unmet standardization requirements. The board would ask questions, seek her advice (if needed in addition to her proposal), and give her its recommendation. Board Chairman Sam Alvord reports.

> Marge would come to every school board meeting, make a presentation, and then we consulted with her, advised her, asked her questions, and then we'd just kind of outline the plan for the next month. It was basically a consensus process involving direct dialogue among all of us.

Frank made special efforts to assist the teachers and not add to their workloads and responsibilities. She attended numerous workshops and brought back curriculum documents from other districts and examples the state department distributed. Frank first screened the documents to save the teachers' time. One difficulty Frank often encountered was that the district materials she obtained were from districts much larger than Pinehurst and had little application to Pinehurst's circumstances. In addition, the state department handouts were very generic and not well tailored for the small, rural school district. Frank wanted to write high utility curriculum materials that teachers would use. To ensure this, she knew she had to have the teachers' input. Frank explains.

> First of all, the curriculum materials from nearby districts were bulky and we didn't like the way they were organized. Of course, all of the districts in this area are much larger districts, even the small districts. I didn't think their products would work for us. I went to the teachers and said, 'Hey, we can do it this way, or we can do this other way. What do you think? What's going to be the easiest to use? I don't want to spend my time writing something that you can't use.' We agreed on the format of the curriculum that way.

Teachers felt that Frank provided good leadership in preparing their curriculum documents. She gathered information on new state requirements, on new materials, and on required textbook adoptions. Frank then coordinated the teacher inservice days and weekly meetings to prepare the teachers for the new requirements in each curriculum area. She engaged the teachers thoroughly in the process and maximized their available time. Teacher Pat Alvord describes how Frank organized the work sessions to assist the teachers.

> She (Frank) would say a month or so in advance of a particular inservice session: 'At this inservice day, I need you to talk to me about your math resources.' We would create long lists and discuss them together. She would also sit and ask us for information about how we taught some of our subjects. In addition, she would advise us on the new requirements by telling us, 'You'll need to document that you're using these materials and teaching these skills. If you find out that you're weak in some areas, then you need to do things a little bit differently.'

Instructional Assistant Maureen Bridges remembers the communications between classroom staff and Marge Frank as being very collegial and open. They had a profitable ongoing dialogue about Oregon standardization. The teachers felt that Marge was more knowledgeable about the state requirements than anyone they knew and this fact added weight to her recommendations. Bridges describes a typical vignette.

> She would say, 'The state is going to require us to do this and this and this. How can we meet these requirements in our school with what we have?' It was more of a dialogue. Sometimes she would say, 'Does this look like something that's usable for us?' The teachers would go look and sometimes they would accept it and other times they would say,'No, this is not for us!' Other times they would bring their ideas to her and she would try to infuse them into what she was writing.

Oregon Department of Education Site Visit

Frank worked particularly hard to prepare all elements of the school district's operations for the Oregon Department of Education's final site visit. This site visit was the culminating event in the standardization process and it followed three years of preparation by the Pinehurst School District and community. The burden is on the school district to document classroom activities that met or have met the new standards. Pinehurst School Board member Jeanne Randall describes how Frank prepared the district.

> Marge was really the one on top of this requirement. She knew there were some gaps early on and that the day-to-day activities looked good and looked like a lot educationally is happening for kids. However, she knew that we didn't have documentation behind these activities to prove to the site visitation team what's happening in the classroom. Marge was the one who said, 'Look, this is coming down to the wire and it's not on the shelf, so we have to create the paperwork that demonstrates what we're doing at Pinehurst School.'

The site visit was quite successful. The Oregon Department of Education site team was helpful and supportive of the district's and community's efforts. Site visits had gained a bad reputation from a few districts who had not adequately prepared for them. Frank wanted to avoid this situation and be certain that Pinehurst's site visit went especially well. The hard work Pinehurst put into all phases of the new standardization requirements, including the site visit, paid off. Frank explains.

> It went very well. I was in contact with our team (state department of education) leader almost a year ahead of time and I knew exactly what they were looking for. I knew what to expect. The state department site visit team did a very nice job of making people feel comfortable and not threatened. They were very positive.

Summary

Marge Frank's responsibilities to prepare Pinehurst School District for new Oregon state standardization requirements were considerable and wide-ranging. Although officially appointed as an educational consultant, her tasks and accomplishments truly define her role as the school district's curriculum director. The various major tasks that Frank conducted while directing Pinehurst School's standardization efforts include:

- Trained teachers or provided training for teachers
- Arranged for the board of directors to visit other school districts preparing for a state department of education site visit
- Wrote school district's new curriculum documents (very demanding task)
- Prepared community and school district for state department of education site visit
- Visited other school districts to gather information for standardization requirements
- Studied and learned Oregon State Statutes and Administrative Rules about standardization requirements. Taught same to teachers, board members and other community members

Meadows Valley (Idaho) School District

A community committee comprised of parents and educators leads the activities of Meadows Valley School District's community-based curriculum renewal project. The committee is named the Performance Based Education (PBE) Committee. Parent activist Holly Thrash chairs it and has done so since the committee began its work. The PBE Committee is spearheading the school district's restructuring efforts. The committee's primary goal is to develop community support for implementing performance-based education throughout the school district.

Community-Led Efforts

The school district actively sought community involvement and leadership in this project. To this end, the district asked Thrash to establish and chair the PBE Committee as soon as it received the grant. The newly formed PBE Committee and the school district wanted broad-based community ownership in the project. They felt this could best be accomplished by obtaining the community's input from the beginning of the project. The committee and the school district reasoned that community support, once earned, would then continue throughout. They felt that an important benefit resulting from increased community support is improved communications and understanding among school district staff, parents, and other community members. Including community members will also

improve other public relations areas by conveying the message that the school district truly wants the community's involvement in substantive school change. Bonnie Thompson, Head Teacher at the elementary school, and a member of the PBE Committee, describes its role.

> Our role, I think, was to try and educate the public from the beginning, so when we got to the critical elements of exit outcomes and writing curriculum, they would understand why we had to move in that direction. They would know that change was necessary. If we educate them at the beginning, they're a lot more receptive at the end.

Holly Thrash, chairperson of the PBE Committee, is an unpaid volunteer. This is important to other community members because it gives her added status for being independent of the school district. Furthermore, it adds credibility to the school district for asking Thrash, an involved parent, to chair the committee. Besides being actively involved with this school renewal project, Thrash assists her husband in his business. Like many other parents, she is very busy. However, Thrash's appointment as chair is especially important because she draws in other parents who feel they have a lot in common and can communicate with her. School Counselor Myrna Caron describes Thrash's value to the project.

> I think having Holly as chairman of our Performance Based Education Committee has been brilliant. Having Holly, a parent, who has been so enthusiastic and resourceful has alleviated some parents' fears about school change. Some community members who were reluctant to ask us school folks questions will ask Holly. The parents ask Holly and then got interested and expressed their concerns. I think that's been one of the very best things we've done.

The PBE Committee asked teachers to identify parents who they felt would be valuable members of the renewal project. Ultimately, all parents were contacted, informed about the project, and asked to attend a meeting. The teachers and PBE Committee invited one third of the parents to one of three meetings. Those parents who missed one of the early meetings were then re-contacted and asked to attend a later meeting. Other interested community members were also invited to attend one of the meetings. Fourth grade teacher Melanie Jones explains how this process worked.

> Well, we targeted all of the parents and we did it in thirds. We asked the teachers to give us the names of parents they thought would be interested in becoming involved in this project, and we invited them. Then we invited another group, and then we invited the third group. So everyone, all of the parents have been contacted.

Thrash, organized and facilitated these meetings. She held a project overview in which she discussed performance-based education and school restructuring with the participants. She structured most of each meeting to allow the attendees to answer the following three questions: "What indications do you see that change is needed?" "What are your worst fears if we don't change?" "And what are your best expectations if we do?" Thrash describes how she asked the attendees to address these issues.

> We would break up into groups and work with those questions, and everybody would have a chance to have some input. Nothing was wrong, nothing was right, but everybody had a chance for input dealing with those three questions. A lot of interesting items came out of these meetings. I think just asking those questions made people think that there are things out there that indicate that we need change.

This approach set the direction of their task and informed the participants about the importance of the school changes they were considering. Thrash and her committee members have pulled together the data collected at the parent and school district staff meetings. The data clearly indicated that a majority of parents who participated in the meetings supported the types of change the PBE Committee was promoting. It was particularly important to determine that those community members who attended the meetings also supported school restructuring to a performance-based approach. Community members and the PBE Committee agreed that change was necessary and came to consensus on the following general objectives:

- Develop a curriculum and instructional program that increases student motivation
- Articulate the K-12 curriculum, wherever possible
- Develop strategies to reduce the dropout rate
- Increase overall student achievement throughout the district, K-12
- Better prepare students for the world of work

Finances

The funding for the New Meadows community-based program come from two sources. The school district and community initially received a $3,000 Idaho 2000 state grant which the PBE Committee and the school district used to fund the first year's activities. The second funding source came from the school district which allocated $2,000 to pay for staff development costs, incidental PBE Committee expenses, and travel costs for staff and committee members.

The PBE Committee used almost all of the grant funds to pay for two workshops provided to district staff, committee members, and other involved community members. Dr. Tim Waters of Greeley, Colorado, conducted the first workshop on outcome-based education in which he provided background information and a general overview. Waters is also involved with what he calls "peak performance schools" in Colorado, and he shared some of these schools' experience with the workshop attendees. The second workshop was devoted to conflict resolution. In this workshop, PBE Committee members developed their approach to informing parents and other community members about the school district's restructuring plans. Committee members reported that the conflict resolution workshop was quite helpful with later efforts. As an illustration, this workshop provided Thrash with the three questions she asked attendees in the parent workshops.

The funding the school district provided has been used, for the most part, to pay for staff and PBE Committee members to attend other local workshops. It funds release time for the teachers and pays for transportation costs to and from these sessions. Some allocations are also made to pay for general operational costs such as postage and an automatic telephone machine which called parents. Nevertheless, most of these funds are unused and are being saved for future needs. Thrash also authorized the payment of board members' transportation costs to attend state-held workshops. She felt this was very important.

> None of the school board trustees had been involved in going to any information meetings that the state board had put on. In addition, none of them had been able

> to be at the school here when we had people come in and conduct workshops. Since then the trustees have attended workshops in Boise. I think there is much better understanding from the school board on what exactly it is we're dealing with. We have some allies now on the board who are informed and educated about our task.

Goal Setting and Decision Making

The school district has had three superintendents in three years. This caused a lack of consistent administrative leadership to assist the PBE Committee set goals and reach some of the decisions they have faced. As a result, the steering sub-committee of the PBE Committee established most of the goals and made the major decisions the PBE Committee faced. The steering committee, however, is comprised of a cross-section of community members, parents, and school district staff which represent well the school district and community. The board of directors also takes an active role in supporting this project and working with the PBE Committee. The steering committee works well together and reaches its decisions through consensus. Teacher Laura Spelman reports how the sub-committee works together to reach decisions and set goals.

> I think it's everybody. I think that the parents have to have a say-so, and I think the teachers, because they're teaching it, that they have to have a say-so in it. I think it's just teamwork. I don't think any one person can make it.

Summary

The PBE Committee is achieving community buy-in and acceptance of the proposed school changes. The committee's actions have assisted the school district by informing community members and parents, and gained their support for proposed new changes. The committee and the school district particularly wanted community input on writing curriculum and developing the exit outcomes needed in each program area. At this stage in their progress, it appears that Chairman Thrash's initial purpose has been met. Thrash reports.

> The major purpose is to develop as much community awareness as we can, and increase community participation and willingness to accept school change. I think, most importantly, the major purpose is to develop ownership and community buy-in with the project.

Tok, Alaska

The Alaska-Gateway School District's curriculum renewal project relies on community resources to infuse their students' and parents' culture into district curriculum. The school district's initial goal was to upgrade the health/science and the mathematics curriculum. The school district began this process by first asking for teacher volunteers to join the health/science curriculum committee. The district next hired Professor Nancy Murphy from the University of Alaska/Fairbanks to head the committee. After the district hired Murphy and the curriculum committee had more time to analyze its task, the members decided to separate health from science. The members felt that individual curriculum committees should update the curriculum in these program areas because writing new curriculum documents for both health and science was too difficult for one committee to manage.

Community-Led Efforts

Once the health and science curricula were separated, the curriculum committee began to identify courses of study to include in the new curriculum documents. The committee knew it could either adopt existing or create new curriculum. The members decided they wanted to create new curriculum because this approach maximized community input. District staff, not serving on one of the curriculum committees, also felt this was an excellent time to infuse the community's input into the newly-developed curriculum. In addition, the school district was particularly interested in the community setting the exit outcomes in the mathematics, science, and health curriculum areas. To effect this, school district staff knew they had to actively engage community members and parents into the curriculum development process. The curriculum committee began immediately to contact community members for their assistance. The committee wanted to attract as much community input as possible. One of the committee's first tasks was to place an article in the newspaper asking for community volunteers. This proved successful as several community members responded to the article. Barbara Dalke reports on some

of the committee's other early efforts to gain community and school district input on curriculum content.

> We identified things that we thought were important and we developed a needs assessment from that. Then we sent that out to the community, to the students' parents, and to teachers and administrators. When the needs assessment came back with everyone's different input, we used that for the strands of our curriculum.

District staff also asked the Advisory School Boards (ASB) to join the process. There are five local village people on each ASB. As a community-led advisory body, the ASB became actively engaged in the curriculum renewal process. Teacher Larry Bartman describes some the tasks the ASB performs.

> This group also functions, with a few changes of personnel, as the parent advisory committee for several special programs, so this is a very multi-purpose group. They do have a really good handle on what goes on in the school and what should go on in the school. We presented materials and discussed the different parts of the curriculum at several of those meetings.

The committee used information gained from the ASB meetings in addition to volunteer community member input and the needs assessment to provide unique community content for each of the three curriculum areas. The ASBs have a two-fold purpose. They are designed to provide the local community with information about all areas of school district operations and they also serve as vehicles for district staff to obtain substantive community input. Information received from these sessions gave the curriculum committee valuable cultural and historical content information to include in the new curriculum documents.

Finances

The funding for the Alaska-Gateway School District's curriculum renewal project came primarily from the district's operating budget. The district annually allocates funds to support its curriculum projects. In years one and two of the curriculum adoption cycle, the district increases the amount considerably over what it is in other years. For this project, the district also received a Funds for the Improvement of Schools and Teaching

(FIRST) grant that supplemented their district budget allocations. Superintendent Spike Jorgensen describes the district budgeting allocation process.

> The district funds its curriculum groups each year. Then on the first and second years of the re-adoption cycle, we increase the amount quite a lot. So while we are actively participating in review of one of the curriculum areas the budget usually ranges from $2,000 to $5,000. In the re-adoption years, the funding will often be four or five times the amount it is in other years. This amount allows our faculty to get together and update their program area materials.

Goal Setting and Decision Making

Most of the goal setting and decision-making occurs within the committee structure described earlier. Each of the district's curriculum committees represent a good cross section of district communities and are given considerable authority for goal setting and decision-making. All curriculum members' votes count equally, and the committee strives for consensus in their decision making. The school district is very large geographically and committees are structured to include representatives of the varied interests existing within the district. Another reason the curriculum committee have such wide-ranging authority is because they also use extensive input from the Advisory School Boards. These local, advisory school boards have a strong voice in school operations and the curriculum committees always seriously consider curriculum suggestions taken from community members, teachers, and school building administrators. The committees, therefore, make their own operational decisions up until it is time for the Regional Board of Directors to adopt the new curriculum. Teacher Barbara Dalke describes the committee decision making process:

> Since we were all representatives of different communities, then we were bringing in our community needs and the environment we taught in also. This representation help us determine that the goals we set were realistic and achievable. Our district is the size of some states and to meet all of the varied interests, we had to make it so it is applicable to all situations.

Once the district curriculum committee approves the curriculum, it is taken to the Regional Board of Directors for final approval and adoption as the district's curriculum.

The Regional Board of Directors seldom questions the curriculum committee's recommendation. Teacher Sheri Roach explains.

> The curriculum committee is the one who has the final say in terms of what will be presented to the Regional Board of Directors for its approval. The Regional Board assumes that the committee members who have written the curriculum are the experts in the area.

Summary

The Alaska-Gateway School District employed two community-led groups as resources to help it infuse critical cultural elements as outcome objectives into its newly developed health, science, and mathematics curriculum. The district has placed a priority on demonstrating clearly how much it values both the utilization and preservation of the local culture. Unable to achieve this goal with its own resources, the school district had to secure help from community members knowledgeable about Native customs and habits. Educators and community members strongly supported teaching these cultural elements within newly adopted curriculum documents.

Case Study Site Implementation Summary

The success of the projects investigated in this study depended primarily on the resources that community members brought to their school districts. These resources consisted fundamentally of specialized knowledge and technical assistance and fiscal resources dedicated to assisting their districts to meet their curriculum renewal needs. Utilization of these resources came through partnership agreements struck between each of the school districts and members of their communities. These agreements were, for the most part, informal except for the arrangement Pinehurst School District made with its community leader. The Pinehurst School District Board of Directors at first agreed to have Marge Frank voluntarily prepare the district for a state department of education standardization site visit. Later, when this task became much more complex and time consuming than either party first thought, the board signed a contract with Frank compensating her for some of her time.

In four of these sites, committees comprised of a cross section of community members and school district staff led the renewal efforts. Membership included parents, business owners, other community members, school staff, and in two sites, students. Each of these committees set goals and made decisions for their project and reported to the school board or school district superintendent. The school districts cultivated each committee's participation which, in large part, developed community wide support for each curriculum renewal project. The respect each site held for its committee members was instrumental to the success of each of these four renewal endeavors.

The one site not utilizing an organized community committee structure to lead its curriculum renewal efforts was Pinehurst, Oregon. This community is so small that the volunteer spearheading its renewal efforts was able to communicate regularly with all of the key players. Parents and other community members were informed either by calling Marge Frank directly or by attending the school district board of directors meetings, or by dropping by the school and talking to the teaching staff and the administrator. Although its operational structure was simpler and organized primarily around the efforts of one person, it still was quite effective. Frank organized clear lines of communications between herself and the key stakeholders involved in assisting Pinehurst to meet the new standardization requirements. Effective communication was one of the reasons Pinehurst was successful in its curriculum renewal efforts.

Adequate funding was necessary for each community-led project. Three of the sites--Washington, Idaho, and Alaska--relied on federal and state grants to provide much of the funding of their projects. Although Montana received a small grant, it depended almost entirely on community revenues realized from several fund raising drives. These four sites also used smaller amounts of school district budgeted funds to pay for part of their project costs. Oregon is the only site which funded its project totally from school district general fund revenues. The Pinehurst School District Board of Directors built these funds into its operating budget each year. Regardless of the source, however, none

of the sites would have had the successes it did without a dependable level of revenues sufficient to fund their operations.

Three other elements besides adequate funding existed across all of the sites that were vital to the implementation of these projects. These were: (1) a key community person or persons, (2) community possession and utilization of critical resources, and (3) various forms of school district leadership that supported the renewal project. These three elements, in effect, became the foundation that allowed these sites to employ important steps necessary for the implementation of their projects. These elements were sufficiently critical that the absence of any one of them could have jeopardized the success of each project.

Each site had a community member or members who stepped in and assumed leadership roles. These persons have status in their communities and were successful in organizing school staff and other community members into an effective team working together to meet their curriculum renewal needs. School staff had a voice in recommending the community person to lead their efforts in three of the five sites. In the remaining two sites, an existing community group nominated this key community leader or tragic circumstances thrust a particular parent into this role.

The resources community member(s) brought to the projects were absolutely essential to their completion. Simply stated, no one else or nothing else could replace what these community members contributed--their participation and contribution is the crux of each curriculum renewal project. Consider, for a moment, the circumstances involved in each of the sites. In La Push, Washington there could be no Native language and cultural program without the skilled tribal elders to teach these subjects to their students. In Idaho, the school district needed a respected parent and community member to attract other community members to support their school reform project. The Alaska-Gateway School District could not have infused tribal skills and customs into new curriculum without community members who were willing to share their knowledge and

expertise. The Montana drug and alcohol free education project would not have continued without community members committed to securing the resources necessary to fund the project. And, in Oregon, the school district was unable to meet the new state standardization requirements until a community member came forward with the necessary skills to lead their efforts. Without these community-based resources, there would have been no curriculum renewal in these sites.

The last element vital to the operation of each community-led project was school district leadership willing to assist and commit the school district to helping with the project. The community-based renewal undertakings described in this study would have been hobbled without school district assistance. Most often, a district administrator, usually the superintendent, was the school person who first told other school personnel about the community-led undertaking and sought their support. However, a district administrator was not always the first educator to promote these projects. For example, in Scobey Montana, school counselor Larry Wahl, was the first educator directly involved in their project and persuaded high school principal George Rider to consider involving the high school. In Oregon, the board of directors became very involved simply because the community and the school are both so small that any activity involving one of them usually involves the other. Finally, each site developed a partnership between the school district and various community members. The partnership was a necessary ingredient for success which could not have occurred without school district leadership working with community members.

Table 2 illustrates each site's organizational structure.

Table 2: Organizational Structure of Community-Based Renewal Projects

Community Group	Organizational Structure	Funding Sources	Purpose	Curriculum Renewal Relationship
Alaska	Committee	Grants/District funds	Preserve Native culture and customs	Infuse local culture into new curriculum
Idaho	Committee	Grants/District funds	Meet new state guidelines	Redirect instructional emphasis
Montana	Committee	Community/ District funds	Implement new drug and alcohol program	Articulate within existing curriculum
Oregon	Individual	District funds	Meet new state standards	Articulate K-12 curriculum
Washington	Committee	Grants/District funds	Preserve Native language	Provide new curriculum frameworks and materials

EFFECT OF COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORT ON LOCAL CURRICULUM

The three approaches of community-based support had varying degrees of impact on the local curriculum in the school districts investigated for this study. For these districts, this support clearly is a necessary ingredient influencing the quality of their curriculum renewal efforts. Interview data indicate that community-based support for curriculum renewal influenced school district's curriculum in the following areas:

- Curriculum that reflects a sense of local ownership and input
- Curriculum materials and approaches that have high utility in the classroom
- District curriculum that reflects the latest curriculum and instructional developments
- Supplies teachers with new resources and methods to meet state standards

Local Input and Ownership

A high level of local ownership and input on the curriculum is inherent with community-based curriculum renewal. Leadership and direction for the schools' curriculum renewal endeavors are primarily community-based and therefore grounded in community-held knowledge, skills, and values. As an example, Pinehurst School District's community members and school district staff took very active roles in meeting the new state curriculum standards. This school and community decided early on not to effect change solely to satisfy the state department of education. They wanted to develop new curriculum documents that truly met their own needs and values. School administrator Jim Titus explains.

> We could have said, 'Okay, we're going to go for a school improvement model to satisfy the state.' But, instead, we wanted to complete our program and say, 'Here's what we are doing.' This process clarified what we would do here in Pinehurst, and how it was different from other districts and other national change efforts. We could say, 'Hey, we're small, and we're going to do it the way that best meets our needs.'

School staff and community members highly value the fact that Pinehurst is quite small and rural. Teacher Jeanne Randall clearly stresses the importance these factors have for the Pinehurst School staff and community members.

> We don't want to lose the flavor of what we had as a very, very small school. We want the kids to continue interacting, and the kids studying and all of that. We don't want to lose that.

The community also feels that Pinehurst School is an excellent setting for education. Staff members and local residents did not want to lose the unique atmosphere in Pinehurst. They felt that simply endorsing another district's plan or adopting the state model curriculum plans would not fit them or their students. The board of directors consciously strove to preserve their learning environment. Marge Frank, Curriculum Director charged with writing the curriculum documents, describes the board of director's position.

> If somebody came up with an idea that was terrible or I knew the state department wasn't going to like, I would say so. But there were times that the board chose to put something into the procedure that the state department and I heavily recommended against. But the board said, 'no, in this community, we want to do this.'

Much of the community-based support depends on high levels of collaboration and communication among the various groups. Collaboration between the community and the school indicates a common understanding and illustrates that the school is reflecting community values. Of equal importance, collaboration also provides a continuity obvious to those students and parents not actively involved in planning some of the school's activities. George Rider, Scobey, Montana, high school principal describes the wide cross section of community members present at their drug and alcohol program meetings.

> When we have a Drug Free Schools meeting, the doctor is there, the pharmacist is there, and other members of the community are there saying, 'Hey, we're concerned about the education of our kids.' These members are actively working for the benefit of the students. We have had drug and alcohol program the past that didn't involve community members and they were not as successful.

Teachers appreciate the fact that they are able to connect district-adopted curriculum to local knowledge, history, and culture. In the Alaska-Gateway School District, teachers construct science lessons around hunting and trapping activities with their students. Elders visit the classrooms and teach the students how to set a trap and then teach what to do with the animal once it is caught. Much of traditional science curriculum and instruction is combined with such lessons. Teacher Larry Bartman explains.

> There is science that the students learn right out in the field. For example, they can experiment and determine at what temperature water freezes. For biology, they can learn about the anatomy of the animal they catch and the use of the different animal parts such as the hide, the fur, the bladder and even the intestines.

High Utility Classroom Materials and Approaches

School administrators, teachers, and community members found that much of the curriculum materials and approaches they collaborated in generating had high classroom utility. One teacher, in particular, felt that the curriculum materials her community developed was very useful. Teacher Cindy Rawlings reports.

> The new curriculum and instructional approaches we are using have much higher application than what we had been using. It is more applied knowledge and not just rote memorization. People need to be problem solvers, they need to be able to find where information is, not memorize stuff so much. Our teachers are becoming more like that, they are becoming more problem-solvers and stressing the practical applications of their lessons more.

In Montana, community members took a proactive stance in the development of a new program emphasizing the effects of alcohol on automobile safety. The school and community collaborated in teaching the new program and some community members often used their own equipment and materials to enrich students' learning experiences. For example, an ambulance group came into the school and taught the hazards of driving while intoxicated. Part of their instruction included some of the terrible consequences of alcohol related automobile accidents. Counselor Larry Wahl explains.

> The Ambulance Association comes in and runs the program totally and completely for us. They explain that one student is injured every minute and that one in every twenty is killed. Then they bandage students and have them walk the halls. That has been very effective because the kids can really see it. The community's been directly involved in this activity and that's only one example.

The Latest in Curriculum and Instructional Developments

Community members and school staff report that community-based curriculum renewal stays current with the latest curriculum and instructional developments. Once an adopted goal is operationalized, school staff and participating community members strive to become and remain current with the latest developments involving their project. Staff members have been provided release time and encouraged to attend training workshops and inservices which they share with curriculum committees and community members. Teachers are gratified to learn that their projects keep them current with recommendations in the literature and with other similar projects around their state or region. Teacher Heidi Miller of Meadows Valley School District describes her experiences.

> I was on the state committee about three weeks ago, writing the exit outcomes for the humanities and really learned from the process of doing that the outcomes we came up with are very, very much current, global and community-oriented. I really enjoyed doing that.

In Scobey, Montana, the community members of The Rainbow Connection rely mostly on the school district to locate and recommend training opportunities. School district personnel are much more aware of available workshops and training opportunities. Community members simply do not have as much access or are as aware of as many training options. Counselor Larry Wahl reports.

> Community members might come with two or three different ideas they have heard mentioned. But when the school recommends available training sessions, then the community will get excited about them and say, 'Yes, that's a good idea, we should attend.'

Scobey Elementary and High School are connected to Big Span Telethon. Their membership includes access to all of Big Span's publications. The schools use their materials to assist the teachers to write curriculum materials and provide information to

community members about drug-free schools. They use some of Big Span Telethon's drug and alcohol publications as part of their health curriculum materials.

Assisting Local Districts to Meet State Curriculum Standards

Two of the sites in this case study were specifically organized to meet state curriculum standards or to meet state-identified areas of school reform. While not as formal as curriculum standards, these state-identified areas of school reform are, nonetheless, part of the state's strategic plan for school change that local districts are asked to meet. A third site was infusing local language and other elements of their culture into the school's curriculum while meeting accreditation standards. The fourth site had no curriculum standards to be concerned with and primarily employed community-based support to expand elements of their health curriculum. The fifth site, while not ignoring meeting state curriculum standards, fundamentally employed community-based curriculum renewal to lead its drug and alcohol program.

In Oregon, the state mandated **Action Plan for Excellence** drove Pinehurst's community-based curriculum renewal plan. The district had to meet new state-developed curriculum standards within a prescribed timeline. The Oregon Department of Education developed a set of Common Curriculum Goals (CCG's) for each curriculum area. School districts were required to indicate where these goals are implemented in their curriculum and when they are taught. The operational lines were tightly defined, leaving districts little maneuvering room. Utilization of the community-based curriculum renewal model enabled Pinehurst to prepare new curriculum documents and meet the state's established timelines. Curriculum Director Marge Frank wrote the curriculum units with the state department's common curriculum goals imbedded in them. Frank describes how she started the process.

> We first started with the language arts curriculum. We realized we had to totally revamp it. The teachers were doing a lot of good stuff, but it wasn't written down. I went to the Board and said, 'This is what I see going on.' 'There are new curriculum guidelines for language arts and there'll be new ones in different

curriculum areas each year following.' 'We will have to rewrite all of our curriculum.' 'This is something I know about. I'll come up with a plan, work with the teachers, and we'll see what happens.'

In the Meadows Valley School District, **Idaho's Schools For 2000 and Beyond Action Plan** similarly drove their community-based curriculum renewal process. The school and community is working to establish student performance objectives. Teachers and parents feel that setting student objectives will assist them later when meeting state curriculum standards. Teacher Loretta McConnor reports how she feel this new process will facilitate meeting the state standards.

> We have this mandate saying you have to cover this book in a year and that's impossible to do because you've got kids working at all different levels. You end up boring some that could go ahead and leaving some behind, and you're basically working with that middle group. With the PBE approach, I think you can work with all of them. You can have those kids go ahead who are ready to go ahead and you'll still be able to work with those who need to learn the skills.

Quileute Tribal School is working to meet accreditation by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. Superintendent Frank Hanson said that the school had to develop and implement an articulated curriculum to achieve the Association's accreditation. School staff and community members took this opportunity to infuse the local language and culture into the newly articulated curriculum. Teacher Romaine Culpepper gives an example of how this process works.

> I do this a lot with local mythology and fairy tales. There are a lot of similarities. Letting the kids know that this is their Quileute story like the one they just read about in northern Europe, or a story set in the South Seas Islands. We also have our Cinderella type of fairy tale. So I am able to relate to people wherever, because we all have some common threads.

Table 3 lists the effects community-based support has on each site's local curriculum.

Table 3: Effect of Community-Based Support on Local Curriculum

	Alaska	Idaho	Montana	Oregon	Washington
Local Input	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
High Utility Curriculum Products	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Latest in C and I Developments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Meeting State Standards		✓	✓	✓	✓

Summary

School districts employing community-based support for their curriculum renewal efforts report that these approaches have had a significant effect on their district's curriculum. Interviewees indicated a positive impact in the following four areas: developing a strong sense of local input and ownership; creating classroom materials and approaches that have high utility; remaining current with the latest in curriculum and instructional developments; and utilizing resources that assisted four of the five districts to meet their new state curriculum standards.

There are reasons why community-based support produces successful curriculum renewal results. Both local input and ownership are critical to successful community-based curriculum renewal efforts. This curriculum renewal model is so grounded in community involvement, that local input and ownership are givens. Indeed, there would not be a community-based curriculum renewal model were there little or no community leadership to commit needed resources to the school district. In these sites, community members were considered equal partners with school staff. Their input was considered as valuable and critical as any that school staff provided. This level of community involvement created such a sense of local ownership, that it grounded much of the

curriculum renewal occurring in these sites. These factors created or, in some cases, were created by enhanced communications between the community and the school district.

High levels of community involvement in this model is a fundamental reason school districts develop curriculum materials with high classroom utility. Increased community involvement also led to improved collaboration and collegiality among the different community members and school district staff in curriculum and instructional areas. For example, there were numerous instances when community members would bring in their own materials or equipment to teach a particular lesson. Oftentimes the materials or equipment used were unavailable elsewhere and greatly added to the effect of the lesson(s).

Teachers and administrators received training and assistance in developing the latest in curriculum and instructional developments. If the school district hires or the community pays for professional presenters, all individuals involved in the curriculum renewal effort attend the training. School district staff made a concerted effort to see that community members received training in the latest developments. Most community members had little knowledge about available workshops and training opportunities. They appreciated being included in the training because that demonstrated a collegial acceptance in school projects that none of the community members had previously experienced. In addition, this gesture extended a professional courtesy for the efforts the community members put forth for the school district and students.

Two of the sites in this study were specifically organized to meet new state curriculum standards or to meet state identified areas of school reform. And a third school was striving to gain accreditation through the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. This school reported that community involvement expanded their curricular offerings which improved their accreditation prospects. In the one school meeting new state standards, the district would have been severely tested to meet these standards without the community-based support it received. Pinehurst's solution of using a

community member to lead the efforts to meet these new requirements provided a real service to the school district. The other site striving to bring about school reform appointed a parent to lead their efforts. This decision gained vital community support that had been lacking in previous school projects. Interviewees reported that their community-based approach was the best solution to solving their dilemmas.

THE BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORT

As noted earlier, small, rural school districts and communities needed to combine resources to effectively complete specific curriculum renewal projects. Combining resources created viable partnerships that provided many benefits for the involved parties. It is important, however, to determine whether benefits accrued only to the students, parents, school and staff, or whether community members also realized benefits from their participation. For example, does community-based support lead to increased cooperation and collaboration between the community and the school district? If so, then do community members better understand the school environment and, equally important, do school personnel better understand their community's goals and aspirations for the school district?

Scobey, Montana school staff and community members experienced improved collaboration. Some community organizations had little understanding of what the teachers' and administrators' responsibilities were. The same was true of school district personnel. Many of them knew little about the day-to-day operations of some important community organizations. Consequently, both sides often were unaware of what the other was doing, or planning to do. Hospital administrator Ann Roberts describes how the new school-community collaboration helped mitigate the lack of understanding between the community and the school district.

> I think we get better interaction between the school and the community. A lot of times the community is headed in one direction and the school is going in another. In the time I was involved, I saw the teachers' side, which I didn't always see before. I think that the school can be a tight-knit organization because they work

> so closely together. I see that in the hospital, we're a close group. People on the outside don't necessarily know what's going on. This process helped that.

Another benefit was that parents, other community members, and school district staff all pulled together to help the students. They collaborated, shared resources, and participated because they wanted the students to know they cared about them. They felt a united effort was a powerful indication of their concern. High school principal George Rider explains.

> All of the parents, community members, teachers, and administrators joining together give the students a strong message that they care. The teachers are there, they care for the students, they want to listen. People in the community care for the students, they don't want them to drink or to do drugs. The result is that the student is getting a large dose of, 'Hey we care for you.' 'The reason we are here is to get at the problems.'

An added bonus to this community demonstration of support and caring was that it improved family relations between parents and their students. Parent Valeta Nelson explains.

> Our involvement tends to bring families together...we get a carnival going, and it brings families together. This way it gives the kids something else to do actively with their parents, which seems to work really well. Ties the families together.

In New Meadows, Idaho, parents, other community members, and school staff explained that a lack of communication among themselves was a problem before they initiated their community-based curriculum renewal project. Parents and other community members reported that there was a time in the past five years when they did not feel welcome in the school. This perception created a distancing among their groups. That situation, however, has changed. One vital benefit New Meadows and the school district derived from their community-based renewal project was improved communication among the educational stakeholders. This benefit was critical because it led to increased trust and rapport among the key players. Parent Holly Thrash, Chairperson of the Community-School Performance-Based Education Committee, describes how the community-school committee took steps to foster improved communication and increased trust and rapport.

> When we get to the point where we actually are restructuring curriculum or doing curriculum renewal, we will have a pretty good percentage of community people very well aware of what's going on. We plan on keeping them involved in the process as we go along to avoid problems of people coming to the school and saying 'What's going on at the school?', and 'Why is this going on?' It's the community's school and a lot of this project is devoted to getting the community involved at the school.

Several respondents emphasized how improved communication, trust and rapport, and community involvement laid the foundation for the growth of community and school ownership in the new renewal project. Improved communication gave all participants a voice in determining project goals and outcomes. This increased decision-making, in turn, provided all participants a stake in the project that subsequently engendered their support. Furthermore, increased involvement gave parents more influence on their children's education which, these participants felt, would attract even more parents into the project. Parent Holly Becker describes her experiences with the process.

> I think it helps everyone come to a consensus on what they want their students to be able to do when they get out of school. And I think it gives everyone a bit of ownership in it. It gives them congruency with the teachers and the whole system. It will have more parents come in to see how it's working, and I really think over the long run, they'll really see some positive results.

Another important community benefit one of the parents articulated was the increased community pride she saw developing in the high school graduates. This, she felt, would decrease the amount of student out-migration following high school graduation. Those students remaining in their community increase its resources which benefits all residents. Parent Laura Spelman reports.

> I think it's good for the community. I think the better off the kids do in the school and the more support they receive will reduce the number of those deserting such a small town. You have more creativity and, hopefully, the town will benefit from it. They won't have all their bright, intelligent kids leaving to go some place else and then they will support our town.

Pinehurst, Oregon, teachers and community members felt it was very beneficial to have a highly qualified community resident lead their curriculum renewal endeavors. It would have created a severe financial hardship for the school district to hire a consultant

and pay for his/her time and expenses. Despite the expenses involved, however, many school officials and residents were also uncomfortable with hiring an outsider to lead their curriculum standardization efforts. They wanted someone familiar with the Pinehurst School District and community. It was also not a simple matter of releasing the teachers to attend workshops on the new curriculum standards. The teachers wanted to remain in their classrooms and not lead the district's standardization efforts. In addition, the district faced another complication when they released their teachers for workshops or inservices. It was becoming increasingly more difficult to locate substitutes willing to come to Pinehurst.

Marge Frank, former budget committee and board member, parent, and educator, appeared to be the ideal person to prepare the school district to meet the new curriculum standardization requirements. She was very familiar with all areas of the school district's governance and management operations, and most importantly, parents, community members and teachers knew her quite well. The school district was in a quandary trying to keep up with all of the state mandated curriculum changes. Because of Frank's educational background and her writing ability (she is an accomplished educational writer), the board appointed her as a consultant to serve as the district's curriculum director rather than hiring an outsider. Board member Sam Alvord explains the value of Frank's appointment to the school district and community.

> It allowed us to have a very direct hand in the organization and timing and carrying out of this task. We weren't at the mercy of anybody from the outside because Marge had worked with us for many years. It was very comfortable to have a person who we knew, and to know we wouldn't be dealing with a stranger. Also, she was sensitive to what our needs were. For example, she knew what demands were on the teachers and she was very flexible to work with. If one of her proposals didn't exactly fit, she would come up with an alternative.

Members of the La Push community and Quileute Tribal School are pleased with their community-led curriculum renewal project. They feel that they have derived the following benefits from their participation in their project:

- Restoring the Native language and elements of their historical culture into their school curriculum
- Developing independence within the students
- Restoring individual student pride in their own efficacy and personal accomplishments

Respondents reported that their students learning the Native Quileute language and other elements of their culture was the primary benefit derived from Quileute's community-initiated curriculum renewal project. Tribal elders, fearful of losing this heritage and knowledge, wanted the school to teach the language and other core cultural elements to their youth before those few who spoke the language and knew the old customs, died. It was very important to the elders and other tribal leaders to preserve this knowledge so it could be passed on to future generations. School Board President Roger Jackson describes how that situation is changing.

> When I was a little kid, we used to have house gatherings, potlatch parties, drumming, singing, and dancing. The families really talked the language. Now, we have very few, I think we have one or two, maybe three, in our community who can really speak and understand the Quileute language. The cultural part--the drumming, singing, and dancing, the preparing and eating of traditional foods--that was almost lost completely. I would say a lot has been done to revive the heritage and culture and the language of our little community here.

Another benefit that teachers and community members observed was increasing pride among school, students, staff, parents, and other community members in the quality of their school programs. Part of the increased pride is seen in higher self esteem and independence among the students. The higher self esteem and independence is evidenced by the increasing number of students traveling to a neighboring high school to graduate. Quileute Tribal School does not have a high school and students have to travel almost 25 miles to the nearest high school. In the past many students chose not to go to high school. This is changing. Teacher Romaine Culpepper explains.

> This program helps the kids better understand their own identity. And we're bringing pride back. When I first came here six years ago, there was very little pride attached to the school or to the program. It seemed to have been all lost and

> this seemed to considered a school for the throw-away children from the public school district. And we're changing that. Now this is the special place, if you are special, you come here.

School staff, parents, and community members in the Alaska-Gateway School District identified the following benefits they derived from their community-based curriculum renewal project:

- Extensive ownership of the implemented curriculum among school staff, parents, and other community members
- Parents and other community members found the curriculum very practical with high utility for their personal use

The Alaska-Gateway School District had widespread participation among community members, parents, and school staff in the development of their science and health curricula. The district especially sought parental and other community member input on the outcomes for these two curriculum areas. Seeking and then subsequently using parental and community member input greatly increased their sense of ownership in the project. A valuable side benefit was that these parents and other community members gained more knowledge about general school system operations. Equally important, this process also gained the support of other district teachers not directly involved in the project. Teacher Sheri Roach explains:

> You certainly have a lot more buy-in. Parents and community members know more about what we are teaching and why we are teaching it. The participants have helped to make some of the choices which gives them some ownership. It really helps them to appreciate the curriculum more, and accept it more. Also, other teachers who weren't actively involved won't just say, 'Well, this was just this select little group of people and now they're going to force me to use it.'

First aid and health care are concerns to most area residents, but they are of particular concern to members of outlying villages served by the school district. Physician care is usually not available and residents often must rely on their own skills, knowledge, and abilities for immediate survival or first aid needs. The newly adopted health curriculum contains sections on major diseases, as well as sections on survival first aid and the treatment of emergency medical needs. Villagers found these sections of the health

curriculum very practical and studied and used them together with the students.

Superintendent Spike Jorgenson reports.

> The school district serves several villages with a lot of unique health and medical needs. There are no doctors, the nearest doctor is usually an average of 150 miles distant. Residents have life styles that exposes children to very serious diseases such as hepatitis and AIDS. As a result, we provide the best we can in terms of education and match the community needs with what we teach. There is a lot of emphasis on basic first aid and survival techniques. How to build a fire, for example, when it comes to survival, it's pretty important.

Summary

The cases in this study reported several different benefits derived from their community-based curriculum renewal projects. There were some similarities as well as differences reported in the interview data. The only benefit reported almost verbatim in four sites, however, was participant ownership in the process and products. New Meadows (Idaho), Tok (Alaska), La Push (Washington), and Scobey (Montana) listed school and community ownership as an important benefit from their project.

Further analysis of the benefits reveal other interesting results. As an illustration, some benefits spawned others equally important to their school districts and communities. For example, the New Meadows, Idaho, respondents reported that improved communication laid the foundation for establishing good trust and rapport among the participants in their community-based project. In another, the Quileute Tribal School, the teaching of their Native language and other critical elements of their culture led to increased community pride in their school and their instructional programs.

Clearly the community-based curriculum renewal projects investigated in this case study increased cooperation and collaboration between the communities and the school districts. Increased cooperation and collaboration, also led to the school districts and their communities better understanding each others' responsibilities, goals and aspirations. This, in turn, led to parents and other community members deriving numerous benefits

from their curriculum renewal projects. It was not confined to only the students, the school, and the staff. The sites reported a total of eleven benefits which are listed below:

- Improved collaboration and understanding
- Increased community unity that demonstrates a high level of caring for their high school students
- Improved family relations among parents and their students
- Improved communication
- Increased trust and rapport established
- Increased ownership in the project and its products
- Increased pride in high school students decreases their out-migration following graduation
- Maintenance of local control in curriculum renewal project
- Teaching of Native language and other critical cultural elements
- Students, parents, other community members have increased pride in school
- Community members wide use of the curriculum

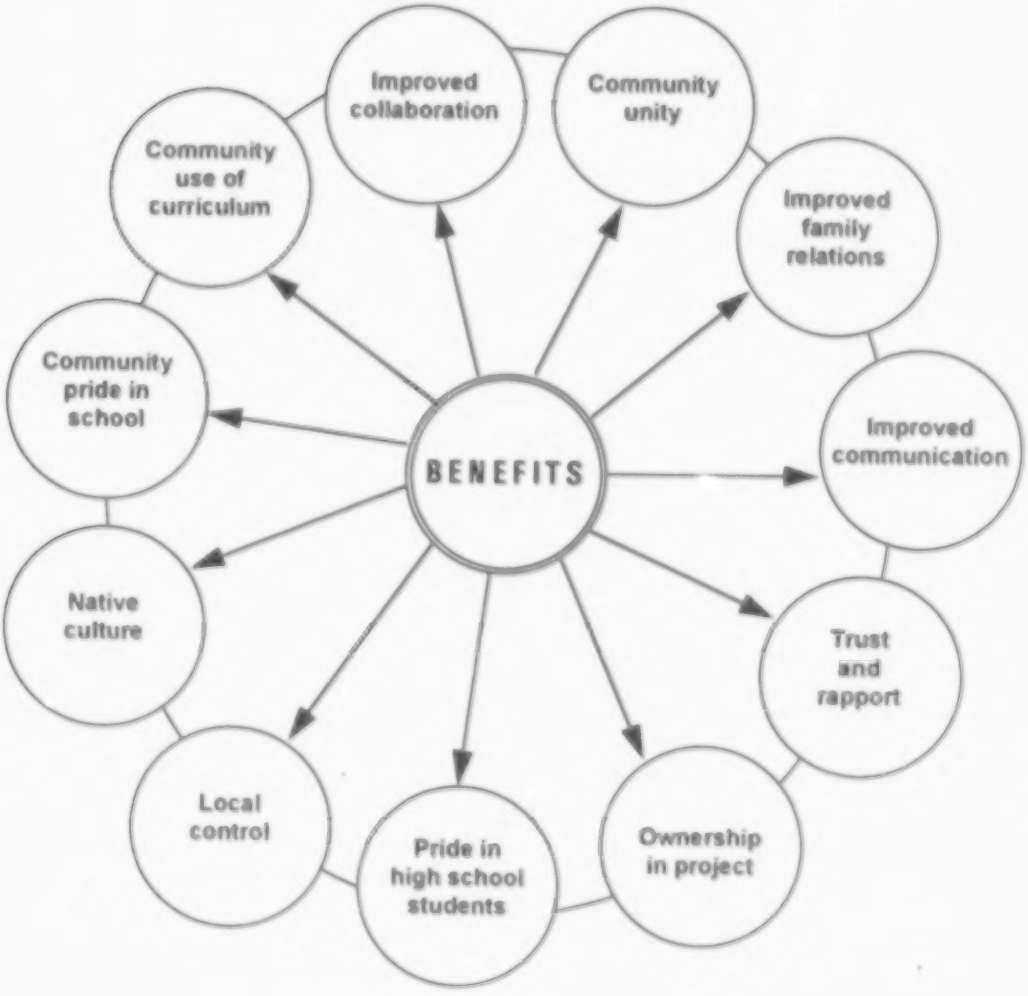
Table 4 lists the benefits reported in each case study site.

Table 4: Benefits from Community-Based Curriculum Renewal Projects

Alaska	Idaho	Montana	Oregon	Washington
Community ownership	Improved communication	Improved collaboration and understanding	Maintained local control in their standardization efforts	Teaching of Native language and other cultural elements
Community use of curriculum	Increased trust and rapport	United community to support students	Improved collaboration and understanding	Community has increased pride in school
	Community ownership	Community ownership		Community ownership
	Increased pride in high school graduates decreases their migration to urban areas	Improves family relations between parents and students		

Figure 2 illustrates how the benefits derived from community-based curriculum renewal projects in this case study are interrelated.

Figure 2. The Benefits of Community-Based Curriculum Renewal Efforts



IMPLEMENTATION STEPS FOR A COMMUNITY-BASED CURRICULUM RENEWAL PROGRAM

Curriculum renewal is an ongoing process school districts are continually engaged in. Bringing together school and community efforts to effect curriculum renewal is no less engaging. All elements of the community must be involved in setting goals, providing services to students, and in monitoring the progress. Homes, communities, and schools are interdependent, and when they work together, students benefit. Below are listed steps taken from these case studies and other research that school districts and communities may use to guide the formation of their curriculum renewal partnerships (Stoops, 1992, Education Commission of the States, 1993). Although these steps are listed sequentially, communities and school districts should not think they have to use them in this same sequence in order to operationalize them. In effect, many of these steps will become blended and combined when they are employed in the field. Regardless of the sequence, however, these steps should contain several salient elements that must be included in any community-school district's curriculum renewal efforts:

- A thorough planning process
- Adequate resources to meet school-community needs
- School district administrative leadership supporting the endeavor(s)
- Community leadership supporting the endeavor(s)
- An assessment procedure(s) monitoring the efforts and providing needed feedback

Step One: Identifying the need.

School personnel and community members need to agree that the proposed curriculum renewal effort warrants consideration. They should work together, analyze proposed curriculum renewal endeavors, and reach agreement by consensus. Examples of such needs could be: new state curriculum standards, research information on quality practices, and emerging local needs and desired outcomes.

Suggestions and questions school personnel and community members should consider when determining the need for a curriculum renewal proposal include:

- The need for curriculum renewal must make sense. Is the renewal proposal clear and relevant? And, who is calling for the change?
- The community should understand the need for this curriculum renewal project. Is there widespread community support for this proposal?
- Renewal must be manageable and feasible. Can the community and school do it?
- Timing is critical to securing stakeholders' receptivity to the curriculum renewal effort. Is the timing good?
- The curriculum renewal process must be cooperative among the stakeholders. Can all key players collaborate?
- Curriculum renewal efforts often require extra flexibility. Are we too rule bound and rooted to maintaining compliance?

Step Two: Develop a planning process incorporating short- and long-range plans.

Planning is particularly important to community-based curriculum efforts because successful renewal will not occur without addressing needs, necessary changes, and requisite resources to effect the desired change(s). Many school districts will have a renewal cycle which involves staff, parents, and other community members. For those who do not have a planning cycle, the listed steps below should assist them to develop a framework for their short- and long-range planning. Worksheets One through Eight (Appendix A) are provided to assist communities and school districts in conducting their planning process.

The following guidelines will help communities and school districts develop and implement their planning process.

- **Assess the climate for change.** There are two basic methods of gathering information.
  - *External environmental scanning.* Identify and investigate what external factors are creating change. These are primarily state and federal agencies.
  - *Internal district/community scanning.* Identify and investigate what factors within the community/district are advocating change and what are the aims driving the effort. (See Worksheet One, Appendix A.)

- **Educate the community stakeholders.** Provide information and orientation to those who are most affected and those who the community and school most want committed and involved.

- **Develop an Action Plan.** This involves a series of activities conducted as a group process with the key school personnel and community members actively engaged. Consideration must be given to the following:
  - *Identify needed resources*
  - *Set goals to bring about the desired change*
  - *Design specific short-term and long-term strategies to achieve your goals.* (See Worksheets Two through Eight, Appendix A.)

- **Implement the Action Plan**
  - *Allocate previously identified resources*
  - *Train participants as needed*
  - *Communicate well and often with all stakeholders*

- **Monitor the Action Plan**
  - *Design an assessment process that measures "where we are going", and "how we will know we have arrived"*
  - *This process must be an integrated one that enhances meeting goals and strategies, not simply auditing school-community activities*
  - *Develop a formative measure(s), within this process, which allows for revision in original plan*

- **Review the Action Plan**
  - *This is a constant process involving continuing evaluation, replanning and revision*
  - *Develop effective communications system which informs all parties*
  - *Realize this step leads the planning process back to Phase One to begin anew.*

Step Three: Securing resources. (May also be included in Step Two above.)

Time, resources, and leadership are necessary curriculum renewal support elements. Of these, human and fiscal resources are fundamental to any community-based renewal effort. Recognize also, that of all needed resources, school district administrative support is a critical element necessary to bring about any effective curriculum renewal. Few curriculum renewal endeavors will long succeed without school district administrative support. However, overall project leadership from the school, community, or both, is equally crucial for success. Planners should continually be on the lookout for individuals with leadership skills who are willing to assume this responsibility. Care must be taken not

to overextend these individuals because the absence of project leadership can cause stagnation which diminishes overall achievement. These leaders must be supported, praised, and, ocassionally, given a respite from their responsibilitiess to avoid burnout and possible resignation from the project.

A continual question facing rural communities and schools is, "How do we secure needed resources?" There are various methods rural schools and communities may employ to conduct an analysis of available resources. (See Worksheets One, Seven, and Eight in Appendix A designed to assist school administrators, teachers, or community members inventory available resources.)

Questions communities and schools may ask to assist their resource identification:

- Are the staff, parents, and community members in support of this innovation?
- What specific staff in the district would help with this?
- What specific community members would assist?
- Does the school district board of directors support these efforts?
- Are there any school district funds available to devote to curriculum renewal?
- Are there any community funds available to devote to curriculum renewal?
- Are there any state or federal grants applicable to our situation?
- Is there adequate school district administrative support?
- Have we taken all necessary steps to obtain broad-based community support?
- Is someone willing to monitor revenues and the budget(s)?

(See Worksheets Seven and Eight in Appendix A.)

Step Four: Maintaining the Momentum.

Oftentimes, maintaining the momentum in a community-based curriculum renewal endeavor can be difficult. However, this is as critical a step as any of the others and must not be ignored. Participants must know, from the outset, that this endeavor may require a long-term commitment.

Suggestions school and community leaders may follow :

- Prepare participants for a long-term commitment
- Keep the original goal(s) in the participants' sight
- Do not over innovate
- Applaud successes
- Encourage the participants to have patience

The following checklist is provided to assist school district personnel and community members complete each of the steps listed above. The checklist may be used in conjunction with Worksheets One through Eight in Appendix A.

Implementation Steps Checklist

✓

☐ **Identifying the need**

- Is proposal clear and relevant?
- Is there widespread community support?
- Is the timing good?
- Can all key players collaborate?
- Is the proposal manageable?

☐ **Developing a Planning Process**

- Assess climate for change
- Educate stakeholders
- Develop Action Plan
- Implement Action Plan
- Monitor Action Plan
- Review Action Plan

☐ **Securing Resources**

- Staff, parents, community in support?
- Specific staff who will help?
- Specific community members who will help?
- Does board of directors support plan?
- School District funds available?
- Community funds available?
- State of federal grants available?
- School administrative support present?
- Taken all steps for community support?
- Someone to monitor budget?

☐ **Maintaining the Momentum**

- Prepare for long-term commitment
- Keep original goal in sight
- Don't over-innovate
- Applaud successes
- Promote patience

IMPLICATIONS

The rural school districts studied for this handbook are effective models which employed community-based support to meet their curriculum renewal needs. The curriculum renewal activities they engaged in were major undertakings that individual school districts and their communities found difficult to accomplish alone. Both needed each other's assistance. Communities and school districts accomplished this by forming partnerships in which they identified needs, set goals, organized efforts, and shared resources to meet their curriculum renewal goals. These school districts were clearly unable to meet their curriculum renewal needs without substantial community-based support. The communities possessed special resources vital to the completion of the school district's curriculum renewal goals. The effect of this broad-based community support presents a compelling argument for more school districts to infuse elements of community life into their curriculum.

School districts and their communities incorporated several key steps that fostered curriculum renewal for their teachers, parents, students and other community members. First, members of these joint ventures identified a concern or an area of school district operations they wanted improved. This curriculum renewal need was important and most members of the community knew that either a community group, the school, or both wanted changes made. Second, the core organizing group planned how they were going to bring about change. Whether community members approached the school district or vice-versa, each site developed an ongoing planning process. Short- and long-range planning was critical to the successful implementation of each site's project. General project areas these groups planned for included funding, training of parents and teachers, school district and community involvement, and effect on student achievement. Third, the core organizing group attempted to gain community wide support of the project involving school personnel as well as community members. They knew that widespread community support was critical to the success of the project. Fourth, members employed effective

and efficient communications. They wanted to keep all community members informed about their progress. This was especially true for any community member or group not actively involved. Fifth, once members identified their curriculum renewal area and routinely followed through with numbers two through four above, they remained persistent to meet their goal(s). They stayed on task and were not deterred when they met obstacles. Sixth, each site monitored its progress toward completing its curriculum renewal project. While each site might not have conducted a formal assessment of the community's and school's progress, each location certainly knew how well it was doing relative to meeting its curriculum renewal goals. In one location, it might not be much more than an informal discussion among key participants. While in another, it was a formal written report given to the school district board of directors. Regardless, each site monitored its progress and planned its new activities accordingly.

Across all of the sites, community-based curriculum renewal support engaged a broad-based community support system for each community's project. Not only did each community assume a major role in providing the necessary resources for each project, community members also learned a lot about their school district. And conversely, the school district personnel learned about community members' concerns, aspirations, and (sometimes) fears about the school district. In addition to creating understanding on both party's sides, it also created a sense of appreciation for what each side was doing and trying to accomplish. School Counselor Larry Wahl explains.

> The school often times gets blamed for everything. If something's getting done, the school gets blamed. If something's not getting done, the school gets blamed. Now it doesn't make any difference, everybody's got a little piece of the pie, and part of the responsibility.

This attitude among the key players of sharing resources, energy, and results certainly led to increased collaboration and collegiality as noted earlier. Equally important, however, is that this process of meeting a common goal also greatly minimized turf battles among the stakeholders. Furthermore, this approach validates community

members' contribution to school district curriculum renewal endeavors. The interactions provided by community-based curriculum renewal efforts greatly enhance this important dimension of school-community relations. Another result of increased local input and ownership in the curriculum was that community involvement also increased trust and rapport among community members and school district staff and board members. Respondents reported that they better understood each other. This, by itself, could well have the most positive long-term effect on curriculum renewal efforts.

Several general results occurred from the creation of the community-school partnerships which led each site's curriculum renewal efforts. They are, in actuality, community-wide effects that become a local infrastructure that may be used for future endeavors. These results are:

- Increased community problem solving
- Increased community innovation development
- Increased location and employment of local resources to meet project needs
- Increased community confidence in ability to solve local problems

The results listed above clearly indicate that these communities and their schools increased their local capacity to meet their curriculum renewal needs. The individually-listed results illustrate how these school districts and their communities organized their efforts, looked inward and used their own knowledge, skills, training, and other resources to solve their problems. These sites accomplished their curriculum renewal goals with a minimum of outside assistance. This is a worthy achievement. These schools and communities found solutions without relying totally on outside experts or thinking they could not do it without securing considerable amounts of outside resources. They did it themselves, and mostly with their own local resources. They tailored their projects to their community needs. These achievements allowed them to sustain valued elements of their culture and heritage which increased community ownership in their respective endeavors.

APPENDIX A

Worksheet One through Worksheet Eight

Worksheet One
Internal and External Scanning

Local needs or priorities for curriculum renewal	Regional or local economical, social, educational trends	Research identified trends affecting curriculum and desired student performance

Worksheet Two
Community-School Action Plan Goals

GOAL ONE:

GOAL TWO:

Worksheet Three
Community-School Action Plan Strategies

STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS

1. **Implementation Strategy:** (For example, join community committee identifying available resources.)

2. **Implementation Strategy:**

3. **Implementation Strategy:**

Worksheet Four
Community-School Action Plan Strategies

STRATEGIES FOR OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS

1. **Implementation Strategy:** (For example, identify individuals to serve on community-school committees, locate needed resources.)

2. **Implementation Strategy:**

3. **Implementation Strategy:**

Worksheet Five
Community-School Action Plan Strategies

STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

1. **Implementation Strategy:** (For example, join community committee identifying available resources, inform school district board of directors of project, seek school district funding, inform teaching staff.)

2. **Implementation Strategy:**

3. **Implementation Strategy:**

Worksheet Six
Community-School Action Plan Strategies

STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS

1. **Implementation Strategy:** (For example, develop fund raising activities, work with other students, inform community groups of action plan progress.)

2. **Implementation Strategy:**

3. **Implementation Strategy:**

Worksheet Seven
Participant Inventory

	Who are the key community/district people to involve?	How will they contribute to the renewal efforts? (For example, is there leadership potential?)	How can we reach them?	Who's responsible for contacting individuals?
STAFF				
BOARD				
PARENTS/ COMMUNITY				

Worksheet Eight
Inventory of Curriculum Renewal Resources

Community/District Resources	What Do We Have?	What Do We Need?
Human		
Staff:		
Parent/School Group:		
Board:		
Other Community:		
Fiscal		
Inservice Budget:		
Chapter Two Funds:		
Release Time:		
State Grant Funds:		
Support of Local Business or Industry:		

(Stoops 1992)

Worksheet Eight (continued)

Community/District Resources	What Do We Have?	What Do We Need?
Time		
Regular School Hours:		
Extended Contract Time: mornings, evenings, weekends, summers		
Leadership		
Board support of project:		
Demonstrated superintendent support of project:		
Staff support of project:		
Parents, community, staff behind superintendent:		
Has the community/district considered all of the available resources and strategies?		

(Stoops 1992)

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